

Entangled Histories of the Balkans

*Volume One:
National Ideologies
and Language Policies*

Edited by Roumen Daskalov
& Tchavdar Marinov



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2013

Cover Illustration: Top left: Krste Misirkov (1874–1926), philologist and publicist, founder of Macedonian national ideology and the Macedonian standard language. Photographer unknown.

Top right: Rigas Feraios (1757–1798), Greek political thinker and revolutionary, ideologist of the Greek Enlightenment. Portrait by Andreas Kriezis (1816–1880), Benaki Museum, Athens.

Bottom left: Vuk Karadžić (1787–1864), philologist, ethnographer and linguist, reformer of the Serbian language and founder of Serbo-Croatian. 1865, lithography by Josef Kriehuber.

Bottom right: Şemseddin Sami Frashëri (1850–1904), Albanian writer and scholar, ideologist of Albanian and of modern Turkish nationalism, with his wife Emine. Photo around 1900, photographer unknown.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Entangled histories of the Balkans / edited by Roumen Daskalov and Tchavdar Marinov.

pages cm — (Balkan studies library ; Volume 9)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-90-04-25075-8 (v. 1 : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-90-04-25076-5 (v. 1 : e-book)

1. Balkan Peninsula—History. I. Daskalov, Rumen, editor. II. Marinov, Tchavdar, editor.

DR36.E67 2013

949.6—dc23

2013015320

This publication has been typeset in the multilingual “Brill” typeface. With over 5,100 characters covering Latin, IPA, Greek, and Cyrillic, this typeface is especially suitable for use in the humanities. For more information, please see www.brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 1877-6272

ISBN 978-90-04-25075-8 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-25076-5 (e-book)

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

In this collective volume, we use several different systems to transliterate Cyrillic scripts. For Macedonian and Serbian, we follow the commonly accepted Latin transliteration of these languages, which involves the usage of special characters with diacritics (such as *č*, *š* and *ž* for the Cyrillic letters *ч*, *ш* and *ж* respectively). In Serbian, which is officially written both in Cyrillic and in Latin, the principles of transliteration are very strict. In Macedonian, there is room for some hesitation, for instance about the letters *ќ* and *џ*. We adopted for them the digraphs *kj* and *gj*, instead of *ć* and *đ*, which are often used but reflect Serbian rather than Macedonian pronunciation.

However, the system with diacritics is not typical of the Latinization of Bulgarian and Russian scripts. For them we use English-derived digraphs (*ch* for *ч*, *sh* for *ш*, *zh* for *ж* and *ts* for *ц*). The *y* stands for the *ѣ* in Bulgarian and in Russian, but also for the *ѣ* in Russian Cyrillic: a small inconvenience triggered by our preference for a more practical “English” transliteration. Accordingly, the *ю* and *я* are transliterated as *yu* and *ya*. The Russian soft sign (*ь*) is denoted with an apostrophe (*'*). This system seems to be the most popular one for these languages and, at least in Bulgaria, it is currently favored by law. However, as the same system does not distinguish between the vowel *a* and the *schwa* (*ə*), we use the character *ǎ* for the latter (namely, for what is *ѐ* in the Bulgarian Cyrillic).

The principles of Latin transliteration of the Greek script are also far from obvious. We abandoned both the classicist transliteration in an Ancient Greek manner (for instance, *η* Latinized as *e*) and the hypertrophic imitation of the modern Greek phonetics (with, for instance, the digraph *dh* for *δ*). We tried to follow a middle road. For instance, *η* is transliterated as *i*, but the ancient diphthongs *αι*, *ει* and *οι* are denoted by *ai*, *ei* and *oi*. Although this does not reflect the modern pronunciation, it makes possible some visual recognition of the Greek form, which would otherwise be difficult with the introduction of *e*, *i* and *i* respectively.

Of course, we have retained the spelling of well-known geographical names (such as *Sofia* instead of “Sofiya”).

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PREFACE

Roumen Daskalov

Modern Balkan history has traditionally been studied by national historians in terms of separate national histories taking place within bounded state territories. Such historians have also taken an interest in former irredenta and ethnic minorities in neighboring countries as well as the influence of Great Powers on their nation. The far fewer historians who are engaged in Balkan studies and usually specialize in relations with one neighboring nation have a somewhat broader perspective. They explore economic, political and cultural “relations,” “influences,” “interactions” and “borrowings” between peoples and states within the Balkans and from without. Yet, with a few notable exceptions, this is done with the nationalist (essentialist) presumption of firmly established and almost immutable entities of the interactions (usually ethnic groups), with the idea that members of one nation or would-be nation make a “contribution” to another group or act to its detriment. As for influences and imports from outside the region, particularly from Western Europe and Russia, these have been studied in the old-fashioned manner of one-directional “flow” and passive “reception,” often with a critique of the “distorted” manner of their reception and adaptation. Finally, Balkan history has most often been written as parallel national histories of the separate peoples/countries without regard to other historical entities or overarching principles of organization.

The authors in this volume take a different approach and bring to bear a different set of values. They all seek to treat the modern history of the region from a transnational and relational perspective in terms of shared and connected, as well as entangled, histories, transfers and crossings from both without and within. This goes along with an interest in the way ideas, institutions and techniques were selected, transferred and adapted to local conditions (beyond the negative biases of such adaptation) and how they interacted with those conditions, resulting in *mélanges* and hybridization. It also invites reflection on the interacting entities in the very process of their creation and consecutive transformations rather than taking them as givens. In view of the complexity and interconnectedness of the region and its long-standing relations with the West and Russia, this

approach seems particularly justified and promising. We revisit old issues and sources and, by looking at them from a relational perspective, we try to tease out new aspects and meanings from familiar events. Moreover, entirely new “objects” of research are being constituted in the process.

In this manner the present volume attempts to treat national formation in the Balkans as a process of cultural articulation and disentanglement, demarcation and separation, triggered by some peoples and followed by the rest. It opens with a chapter on shared pre-national identities in the region, especially the Orthodox cultural union, which was the starting point of the processes of national construction. The first set of contributions focuses on the formation of national ideologies and identities in constant interaction between two or more communities, or rather, between their activists engaged in struggles of cultural affirmation and territorial separation. There is a chapter on the Romanian-Greek and Bulgarian-Greek interactions and entanglements, on the abortive attempt to create a wider (imperial) Ottoman identity, and finally, on the later formation of a Macedonian national ideology in intense disputes with, but also borrowings from, Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian nationalism. The second group of contributions takes up a central aspect of the national processes, namely, the formation of literary languages and language policies, again guided by the idea of differentiation from, and opposition to, neighboring peoples. It contains a chapter on the fortunes of Serbo-Croatian, a chapter on the standardization of the Macedonian language and a chapter on Albanian. Needless to say, the coverage is far from exhaustive, and a number of cases remain outside the scope of the book. However, the cases analyzed here seem highly representative, insofar as they show to what extent the processes of national construction and the policies of language in the Balkans were interrelated. Short prefaces place each of the two parts of the book within the larger regional context. It would be redundant to expand here on the individual contributions. What needs to be said, nevertheless, is that in treating admittedly well-researched topics, the authors are especially interested in the above-mentioned aspects. In keeping with the transnational approach, the contributions try to remain equidistant from their cases and protagonists and avoid (or at least contain and manage) biases. How well they succeed is for the reader to judge.

This volume is part of a larger and rather ambitious research project on the shared, connected and entangled histories of the Balkan peoples. Other volumes organized around different concepts and different thematic circles are being prepared and will hopefully follow. A second volume will address how foreign imports of various kinds were discussed and coped

with in the Balkans and will contain contributions on the transfer, translation and adaptation of various ideologies and institutions in the region. A third volume is expected to concentrate on the appropriation of legacies and “historiography wars.” A final volume will engage theoretically with ways of making Balkan history and present some “micro” case studies.

Bold programmatic statements of principles and intentions are easier made in advance of the actual research, when it is still an idea and a project, often proudly announced by a Web site. With research in progress, it is premature to summarize results and draw conclusions, and we would like to postpone that until a later date. Suffice it to say that we started with a methodological paradigm, frame of reference and key concepts that guide the choice of research themes and their treatment. Such a frame can accommodate varied interests and inquiries, as the above examples show, providing them with a degree of methodological and conceptual coherence. While particularly happy with “entangled history” cases, we cannot expect to find them everywhere and prefer to act as the subject matter dictates, yet within the broader relational approach, being content to demonstrate sharing, connectedness, interdependency, or just making a comparison.

The “entangled history” (or *histoire croisée*) and related approaches do not aim to smooth out conflicts and harmonize the past. The contacts, movements, exchanges and transfers were more often asymmetrical and violent than harmonious and peaceful. Still, there is in our understanding some positive and integrative value in showing how intertwined the histories of the present-day Balkan nations and states were and still are. As long as one does not take a partial and partisan national(ist) view, but shifts perspectives, thus neutralizing bias, this may enhance the feeling of “commonality.” Most of the authors in this book are part of a research team under my (mostly nominal) leadership hosted by the New Bulgarian University in Sofia. There are two external contributors as well: Professor Raymond Detrez from Ghent University and Professor Ronelle Alexander from the University of California at Berkeley, who kindly agreed to participate and share their expertise. The text was copyedited by Chris Springer, whom we thank. Finally, I would like to express the warmest gratitude to the European Research Council for a generous advanced research grant (grant agreement no. 230177) under the European Community’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2007–2013), which provided us all with the opportunity to pursue our research with full dedication.

SECTION ONE

NATIONS AND NATIONAL IDEOLOGIES IN THE BALKANS

INTRODUCTION TO SECTION ONE:
NATIONS AND NATIONAL IDEOLOGIES IN THE BALKANS

Tchavdar Marinov

The first part of the present volume represents an attempt to grasp the common genealogies of different nationalisms in the Balkans as well as to analyze the logic of their historical bifurcation. The study of the connections and transfers between Balkan cultures and political programs is certainly not a new scholarly genre. Indeed, the mutual influences between local national movements and leaders are a traditional field of research for the national historians of the region. Individual monographs and multi-author collections, academic conferences and workshops are dedicated to topics like "Greek-Romanian relations in history," "Bulgarian-Greek cultural contacts" and "the cultural and social relationships of the Macedonians with Serbia." However, in most of these cases, the Balkan nations are essentialized as fixed-in-time, only superficially changing ethnic or national communities. The interactions between them in the modern age, mentioned in a positive manner, are limited to beneficial contributions of actors belonging to one such community to the cultural or political evolution of another one. Otherwise, each nation is supposed to have its own unbroken historical continuity since the Middle Ages (if not since Antiquity), in which the Greeks never ceased to be Greeks, the Bulgarians could be nothing else but Bulgarians, and the Albanians have always been conscious of their distinct ethnic character. This volume takes a different conceptual and methodological stance.

Instead of discussing the national ideologies as uniform voices expressing the collective will of already existing and immutable ethnic or national groups, it tries to survey these ideologies and groups in their "making." Thus the voices and wills are taken in all their diversity, and the various national or quasi-national projects are not subsumed to a unique agenda: those that failed deserve no less attention than those that proved to be historically successful. The national communities are considered here not as frozen-in-time entities but as relational and never-finished phenomena of collective identity. In this way, the numerous sociopolitical and cultural influences and transfers between them are treated not as "know-how" fueled from one into another but rather as aspects of a

process of reciprocal formation. Hence, the actors engaged in this process (individuals and institutions) sometimes do not necessarily belong to one of the collectivities in question, although they have a certain merit for the other. They instead demonstrate the mutual permeability of the communities in formation. In short, this is the meaning of the term “entanglement” and of the references to the methodology of the *histoire croisée* that appear in the pages of this volume.

The following chapters discuss four cases of national entanglement, as well as their eventual historical disentanglement. In three of the cases, the historical connectedness between the respective national ideologies is rooted in their Orthodox confessional identity. These are, first, the Greek-Romanian interactions or how Nicolae Iorga's *Byzance après Byzance* was split into two rival nationalisms; second, the birth of Bulgarian nationalism and its emancipation from Greek high culture during the nineteenth century; and third, the development of a separate Macedonian identity since the late nineteenth century as an entanglement of Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian ideological elements, but also as a negation of them. The Balkan Muslim context is represented by a study of the diverse articulations of the Ottomanist project from the late Ottoman period: it was supposed to bridge the interests of Muslims, Christians and Jews but was based on a confessional identity whose Turkish aspect underwent a gradual process of emancipation.

Although the confessional aspect of the Balkan national constructions is not a topic per se here, it is essential for the understanding of their historical intertwining. As is well-known, the Balkan nations appeared on the basis of—and in spite of—the Ottoman *millet* arrangements, where diverse ethno-linguistic communities (or communities retroactively deemed “diverse”) were grouped together along religious lines. For instance, the Orthodox Christian *millet-i rum* was split, throughout the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, into Greeks, Bulgarians, Vlachs and so on. The universal character of the Muslim community was put in question by the development of Turkish, Albanian and even Bosnian nationalism. Specialists in Ottoman studies have criticized the excessive usage of the term *millet* and the belief in the very existence of a particular administrative “system” dealing with the non-Muslim subjects of the empire prior to the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, it is clear that the articulation of modern national ideologies in the Balkans faced from the outset the domination of institutionalized religious communities. Each of them had its “sacred language” (Benedict Anderson); for the Orthodox community this was the (post-)Byzantine Greek language and culture.

Hence the importance of the Greek context in the studies of the “Orthodox Christian” national ideologies published in this volume: the starting point of a number of Balkan national movements was the pre-modern “Romaic” (Raymond Detrez) identity. They had to gain legitimacy amid the background of a centuries-old common confessional belonging. The situation was complicated even more by the fact that, since the early nineteenth century, the Romaic identity was gradually translated into modern Greek nationalism. It became the “Other” for other incipient local nationalisms like the Bulgarian. But, as a matter of fact, the post-Byzantine confessional ecumenism was an “obstacle” not only for the Bulgarian, the Aromanian or the Orthodox Albanian but also for the Hellenic national leaders themselves. Their relationship to Constantinople—more concretely, to the Phanariot circles around the Orthodox Patriarchate—was initially not unproblematic.

In this respect the Serbian and the Romanian path were somewhat different. The special status of the Serbs under Habsburg domination and the existence of Serbian cultural centers in the territory of the Central European monarchy enabled the relatively early evolution of Serbian “proto-nationalism.” The statehood and the nobiliary traditions of Wallachia and Moldova (although those principalities were not independent from the Ottoman Empire) facilitated the construction of a particular Romanian identity and its emancipation from the dominant Phanariot culture.

Still, the relationship of the Balkan national ideologies to the Romaic and/or Greek identity is by no means only negative. It is enough to say that the Greek Dimitrios Daniil Philippidis (Dimitrie Philippide) was the first to publish a map of “Romania” in 1816. The French language—during the nineteenth century, the language of culture in Romania as elsewhere in Europe, but also the model for the standardization of the Romanian language—appeared in Bucharest and Iași during the Phanariot regime, which was later stigmatized as “Oriental.” In many respects, Greek culture and education encouraged the development of a separate Slavic-Bulgarian identity. For some nineteenth-century Orthodox intellectuals, it is difficult to say to what extent they were Greek, and to what extent Albanian—not to mention the case of the philanthropist Evangelis Zappas (1800–1865), who is also claimed by Romania. Despite their anti-Greek aspect, the Romanian, Bulgarian and Albanian national ideologies are hardly conceivable without taking into account their interaction with Greek culture and its formative role during their first steps.

As is commonly known, from a political point of view, the Balkan national doctrines developed as a rejection of Ottoman rule. However,

modern Turkish nationalism also had to emancipate itself from the various articulations of the Ottomanist ideology that existed in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. In the Turkish case, as well as in those of the Muslim Albanians and the Bosniaks, the Ottoman belonging played a role similar to the one of the Romaic for the Orthodox nations. On the one hand, it was the cultural background of the earliest forms of Muslim national identities, but on the other, it turned out to be an obstacle in their later development. The impact of the Ottomanist rhetoric is visible in the first projects of Albanian and Bosnian autonomist emancipation. Moreover, its elements could be found in non-Muslim ideological context as well—in certain Greek and Bulgarian national projects and discourses, as well as in the supra-national program of the Macedonian liberation movement. In fact, there is an entanglement not only between the histories of the “Orthodox Christian” nationalisms but also between them and their “Muslim” opponents. The development of Turkish nationalism cannot be understood without taking into account the shrinking of the Ottoman Empire, in particular as a result of the creation of Balkan nation-states.

The interactions between the national programs and discourses under scrutiny are certainly not symmetrical. This is largely due to the fact that the processes of national construction are by no means synchronic in the different Balkan contexts. Quite logically, earlier nationalisms provoked the latecomers, whose impact on the former was more limited. Thus, while Greek culture and nationalism played a crucial role in the development of Bulgarian nationalism as such, the latter’s impact on Greek nationalist rhetorics and policies was restricted mostly to the field of the “Macedonian question.” Similarly, the activation of Bulgarian nationalism, following that of the Greeks and the Serbs, provoked the development of the Albanian national movement, which was, however, not even taken into account by the projects of Greater Bulgaria, Greece or Serbia. Macedonian nationalism was largely fashioned by historical symbols, political programs and ethnographic argumentations launched by Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian national ideologues. But despite all the frustration and hysteria that the existence of a distinct Macedonian identity caused—and still causes—within the neighboring nations, their evolution is much less marked by it. Greek nationalists still glorify the struggle against the “Bulgarian bandits” in turn-of-the-century Ottoman Macedonia, while their Bulgarian colleagues are obsessed with a latent “Serbian” control over the former Yugoslav republic.

As a result, some Balkan nationalisms may look more “defensive” or “weak” (Maria Todorova) in their program than others that have developed ambitious “hegemonic projects”: analysts often point to cases like the Greek Megali Idea or the Serbian *Načertanije*. In the mid-nineteenth century, Bulgarian nationalism was still weak and looked defensive indeed with regard to the symbolically dominant Greek identity. Albanian nationalism was clearly defensive vis-à-vis the plans of territorial expansion of the existing Balkan states (as well as some outside the Balkans). However, the concept in question should be used with caution. The “imperialist” Ottomanist doctrine was also defensive in its attempt to counter the colonialist policy of the Great Powers and the “small nationalisms” inside the empire. Similar was the Kemalist national ideology: modern Turkey appeared precisely as the result of a defensive movement trying to reunify the national territory partitioned by Occidental and Greek occupation. Since the very beginning, the Romanian nationalists pictured their motherland as a “Latin island in a Slavic sea.” According to the xenophobic discourse elaborated by leading national figures (most notably the poet Mihai Eminescu), the Romanians were threatened by a long list of enemies (Slavs, Jews, Hungarians, Greeks). Today, Vuk Karadžić is depicted as a terrible Greater Serbian nationalist by Bosniaks and Croats, but in fact he sought to consolidate and “defend” the Serbs from all the territories under foreign rule.

There is nothing especially imperialistic in the plans of “Greater Serbia” or in the Megali Idea—at least not more than in the idea of annexation of Macedonia to Bulgaria. Their promoters always sought to “liberate” and unite “national lands” where (a part of) the population indeed consisted of compatriots. These had to be somehow defended from the appetites of “voracious neighbors.” In fact, every nationalism represents itself as defensive, while its competitors regard it as outrageously overbearing. Nowadays, Macedonians would certainly not subscribe to the idea that Bulgarian nationalism is defensive. The same is true of the Greeks, who had to defend “their” Macedonia and Thrace from Bulgarian aspirations. The plan to annex cities such as Salonika, Edirne, Constanța and Niš could seem like a minuscule ambition from the point of view of the major Western colonialist powers or Russia. But on the scale of the Balkans, it is not so moderate.

The evolution of the ideological arguments over time is another aspect that complicates any strict classification of the Balkan national ideologies. For instance, they often refer to the distinctiveness of the vernacular

language, using it as a primary identity marker. And indeed, the importance of the native tongue—Romanian for the Romanians, Bulgarian for the Bulgarians, Greek for the Greeks—as a symbolic resource is beyond doubt. But depending on the situation, other putative characteristics (religion, “culture,” “racial origin”) used to take the privileged place of the language. Although initially contrasting with the ecumenical character of the Constantinople Church, Hellenic nationalism was later able to instrumentalize the Orthodox religion both in the homogenization of different linguistic groups inside the Hellenic kingdom and in its irredentist program directed to territories where the spoken language was not Greek. Thus the Albanian-speaking Arvanites could be treated as Greeks on the basis of religion, culture and national consciousness; and the Orthodox Albanians outside Greece could be regarded as Greeks on the basis of religion and, to some extent, culture. But even the Muslim Albanians could qualify as Greeks, because of their supposed “Pelasgian descent.”

Despite the ideological emphasis of modern Turkish nationalism on language and ethnic kinship, in this case the Muslim religion has played a fundamental role: the secular project of Kemalism addressed the Muslims, while the Jews and the Christians remained “others.” Since the early twentieth century, Bulgarian nationalists have been able to claim as ethnic Bulgarians not only the Bulgarian-speaking Muslims (the Pomaks) but also the Turkish-speaking Christians (the Gagauz). In the 1980s Bulgarian nationalism, as “defensive” and based on language as it is, was instrumentalized to suppress the country’s large Turkish-speaking Muslim community, officially deemed to be of Bulgarian descent. Thus, in this case as well, the identity marker historically shifted according to the circumstances, from language to religion, and from religion to the idea of an ethnic origin understood in an almost racist fashion. Obviously, neither the “defensive/hegemonic” dichotomy nor the classification of nationalism into “linguistic,” “cultural” and “confessional” can take into account the many articulations of the national ideology even in the limited frames of the Balkans.

When dealing with classifications, a more general question should be addressed here: does the emphasis on the *histoire croisée* of the Balkan national ideologies mean that this book subscribes to the existence of a specific Balkan type of nationalism? Its essential characteristics were often indicated by historians and specialists in nationalism studies. For instance, they state that “Balkan nationalism” is a “belated” phenomenon and, for that reason, especially malign and chauvinistic. The absence of Western political culture inspired by the ideology of the Enlightenment

and the domination of the (aforementioned) confessionally defined “*millet* system” are among the factors that are supposed to demonstrate the artificial character of the local nationalisms: they were, allegedly, imitations of Western European symbolism, doctrines and projects of social regeneration, but started from the outset on the wrong basis.

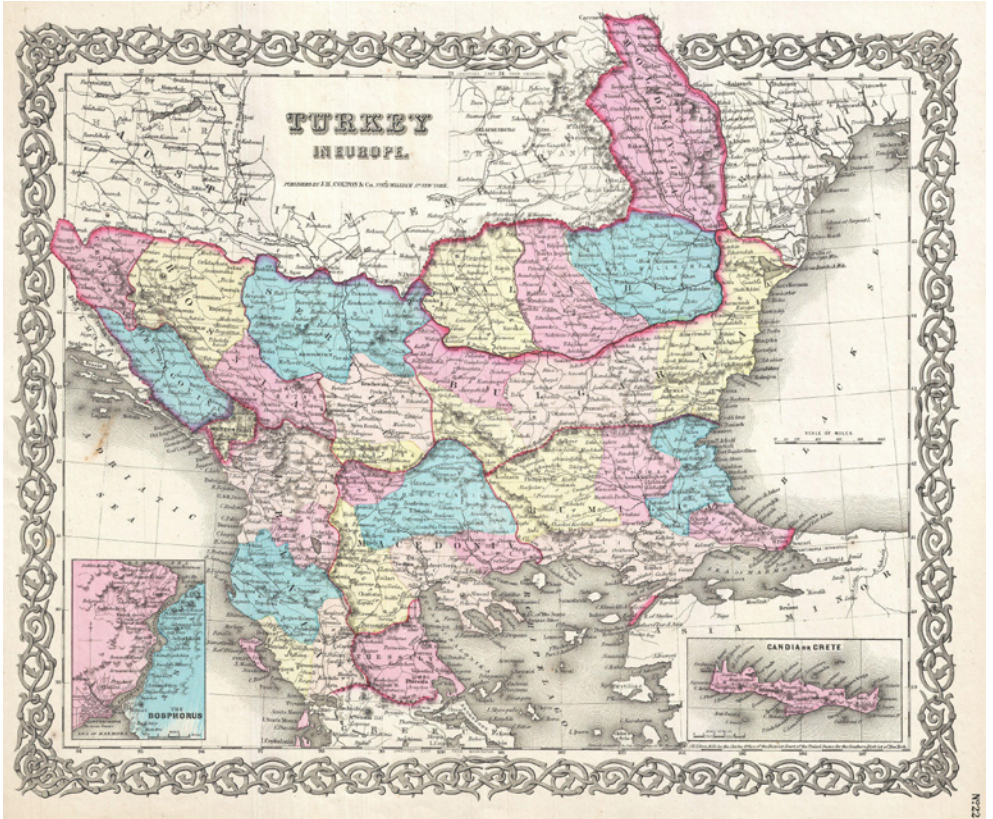
Furthermore, while they developed nationalistic programs, the Balkan societies were barely industrialized at all. This circumstance contradicts, in particular, Ernest Gellner’s theory of the genesis of nationalism (and has been brought up by his critics). The belated industrialization and modernization is often combined with some *longue durée* shortcomings of the Balkans, like the nonexistence of state traditions and the absence of dynastic genealogies and of “historical rights of the crown,” as in the Central European countries. Thus, apart from being not modern enough, Balkan nationalisms obviously lacked the “good” national myths as well. These and similar observations are used to explain why the Balkan national ideologies are so “ethnic” and far from the modern “civic” principles of the enlightened nationalism of Western and Central Europe (although the inclusion of the latter in the “Western model” is not obvious and largely depends on the author).

Lately, the essentializing of a specifically Balkan nationalism has been seriously challenged. A number of scholars from the region dedicated whole works to deconstructing the clichés about the Balkans, such as the notion of it being an ethnic “powderkeg.” The thesis that Balkan processes of national construction were “belated” was also attacked by Maria Todorova, who tried to prove their “relative” synchronicity with those in Western Europe. Theorists such as Rogers Brubaker rejected the ethnic-civic divide altogether as useless in the study of nationalism. It is certainly burdened with an amazing quantity of Western-centric and state-centric stereotypes. Should one also recall the epistemological crisis of the “modernization” paradigm?

Indeed, most of the binary oppositions and classifications that made possible the thesis of a specific Balkan nationalism were proved to be tenuous on closer examination. Many characteristics traditionally considered to be typically Balkan are definitely not. As Benedict Anderson has shown, in general the modern nationalisms erode religious communities with sacred languages: the famous *millets* are, from this point of view, not so exotic. The lack of significant industrialization—or its complete absence—is the rule rather than an exception in the development of national movements worldwide. At the same time, the emphasis on statehood and on dynastic or aristocratic traditions (although these exist

in at least one Balkan case: Romania) tends to neglect the mythmaking aspect of every nationalism: the invention of a continuity meant to disguise historical ruptures as well as the *oubli* and *erreur historique* of Ernest Renan. Last but not least, “national myths” are by no means unique to the Balkans.

This volume hardly seeks to claim a Balkan particularity in the field of national ideology, either of a negative or a “positive” nature. It does not seek to launch new classifications or labels in nationalism studies. Its intention is to highlight the historical entanglement of diverse national ideologies in all of its complexity. This aspect is either neglected (in mainstream national history), or presented in a somewhat idealistic manner (in some circles of Balkan studies), but in any case largely misunderstood. In this way, the present work hopes to contribute to the elaboration of a genuinely transnational perspective to nationalism, in which the various ideologies and identities will be seen not only as products of a common know-how or of a universal checklist, but also as phenomena with shared genealogies. This emphasis on the relational construction of nationalisms, in the Balkans and outside it, is not merely a complement to the traditional interpretations and pictures. Instead, it is intended to provide a genuine counterweight to the “methodological nationalism” in historical research—that is, the imagination of *a priori* existing national specificities and well-bounded collectivities as primary points of reference.



Map 1. Turkey in Europe, 1855.

PRE-NATIONAL IDENTITIES IN THE BALKANS

Raymond Detrez

Most historians now agree that nations and nationalism are recent, “modern” phenomena whose appearance dates back only to the late eighteenth and especially to the nineteenth century. Attempts to demonstrate the presence of a “national consciousness” prior to that period are not convincing. “For any historian,” Maria Todorova remarks, “the evidence [based primarily on sociological constructs] is far too fragmentary to warrant more than the cautious admission of the existence of occasional sentiments in the ancient Near East and medieval Europe articulated by some individuals in terms strikingly similar to those of modern ethnicity and nationalism.”¹

Although most contemporary nations emerged in some complex way from a former ethnic community that acquired a dominant position within a state’s borders, this does not mean that, in the past, membership in that ethnic group necessarily involved the same compelling feelings of belonging and loyalty to that group that, since the nineteenth century, can be observed with regard to the national community. However, if identification with an ethnic group was not the dominant form of self-identification in the pre-national(ist) era, then what was?

In the Balkans, the “pre-national(ist) era” is understood to be the period in history that started after the Ottoman conquest and ended with the penetration of nationalism as an ideology and a sentiment and with the beginning of the process of nation- and state-building. Chronologically, the end of the pre-national(ist) era can be situated in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, depending on which region in the Balkans and which social class is considered. In the part of the Balkans that remained under Ottoman rule, these developments occurred over largely the same time frame and were triggered and conditioned by the subsequent *hatts* issued in the framework of the *Tanzimat*.²

¹ Maria Todorova, “Ethnicity, Nationalism, and the Communist Legacy in Eastern Europe,” in *The Social Legacy of Communism*, eds. James R. Millar and Sharon L. Wolchik (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 94.

² See Aleksandăr Vezhenkov, “Ochevidno samo na prāv pogled: ‘Bālgarskoto vāzrazhdane’ kato otdelna epoha”, in *Balkanskiyat XIX vek. Drugi prochiti*, ed. Diana Mishkova (Sofia: Riva, 2006), 108–121.

A "Balkan Cultural Union"

In 1829 the Slovenian philologist Jernej Kopitar, the founding father of Balkan linguistics, drew attention to the striking similarities between Albanian, Bulgarian and Aromanian, pointing out that in them "prevails one single language form but three types of language material" (nur eine Sprachform herrscht aber mit dreierlei Sprachmaterie).³ Rephrased into plain English, this means that these Balkan languages had one single, common grammar but used different vocabularies. Similarities between languages that have the same origin (such as the German, Romance and Slavic language groups) are a common phenomenon. However, the Balkan languages, though they belong to the same large Indo-European family of languages, are not closely related in origins. Bulgarian is a Slavic language; Romanian and Aromanian are Romance languages; and Greek and Albanian belong neither to a larger subgroup within the Indo-European family, nor are they related to each other. What Kopitar pointed out is that, although Balkan languages have separate origins and thus lexical differences, typologically they have a similar grammatical structure. Linguists have labeled the many hundreds of grammatical similarities between Balkan languages "Balkanisms." Balkan languages sharing all or most of these Balkanisms are regarded as belonging to the "Balkan linguistic union" or "league" (*Balkansprachbund*, *union linguistique balkanique*).

Among the phonological and morphosyntactical similarities that exist among the Balkan languages, the occurrence of a stressed vowel /ə/, the formation of the numerals from eleven to nineteen, the post-positioned article, the reduplicated object, the substitution of the infinitive with a subordinate construction, the formation of the future tense with a particle, the retention of the preterit/perfect opposition and the occurrence of a specific Balkan conditional mood are probably the most striking and well-known ones. To be sure, these similarities do not occur in all Balkan languages. The post-positioned article, for instance, does not exist in Serbian, where there is no article at all, or in Greek, where there is an article, but it is not post-positioned. The way the numerals from eleven to nineteen are formed is different in Greek as well. Balkan linguistics distinguishes between "primary" and "secondary" Balkan languages. Primary Balkan languages are those dealt with by Kopitar. They contain the

³ Bartholomäus (Jernej) Kopitar, "Albanische, walachische u. bulgarische Sprache," in *Jahrbücher der Literatur* 46 (1829): 86.

largest number of Balkanisms. The secondary Balkan languages, Greek and Serbian, have only a limited number of Balkanisms. The differences in the density of Balkanisms result from the geographical location of the languages in question; the area of the greatest density is located near the lakes of Prespa and Ohrid, where the Albanian, Greek, Slavic and Vlach language areas overlap. In addition, Balkanisms are more frequent at the level of the dialects than at the level of the standardized languages, due to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century tendency to “de-Balkanize” the standard languages in order to give them a more exclusively “national” character. Experts in the field of Balkan linguistics have also extensively studied the *differences* between the Balkan languages, but these differences appear to be regional particularities of a grammatical structure which is essentially common.⁴

Opinions differ on how the Balkan linguistic union came into being. However, it is now generally accepted that “the grammatical structures of the Balkan languages attest to centuries of multilingualism and inter-ethnic contact at the most intimate levels.”⁵ This interethnic contact took place in specific historical conditions, such as the absence of state borders in the interior of the Balkans during long historical periods (during the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Empires), which facilitated spatial mobility; the multiethnic character typical not only of these large empires, but also of the more transient medieval political formations such as the Bulgarian and the Serb empires and even of the small feudal principalities that emerged on the eve of the Ottoman conquest; massive population transplantation organized by the state authorities; the linguistic interaction between populations migrating not only from one region to another, but also from the countryside to the towns; seasonal labour (*gurbet*, *pechalba*); transhumance; the great religious traditions, which united ethnic groups into large religious communities, sharing one

⁴ For an excellent short introduction to Balkan linguistics, see Jouko Lindstedt, “Linguistic Balkanization: Contact-Induced Change by Mutual Reinforcement,” in *Languages in Contact*, eds. Dicky Gilbers, John Nerbonne and Jos Schaeken (Amsterdam: Atlantia, 2000), 231–246. For a more exhaustive survey, see Kristian Sandfeld-Jensen, *Linguistique balkanique. Problèmes et résultats* (Paris: Champion, 1930); Helmut W. Schaller, *Die Balkansprachen. Eine Einführung in die Balkanphilologie* (Heidelberg: Winter Verlag 1975); Georg Renatus Solta, *Einführung in die Balkanlinguistik mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Substrats und des Balkanlateinischen* (Darmstadt, Germany: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980); Petya Asenova, *Balkansko ezikoznanie*, 2nd ed. (Sofia: Faber, 2002).

⁵ Victor Friedman, “The Place of Balkan Linguistics in Understanding Balkan History and Balkan Modernity,” *Bulletin de l'Association des études du sud-est européen* 24–25 (1994–1995): 87–94.

language of worship and so on. As Slavs were mostly farmers and Albanians and Aromanians transhumant shepherds, “economic exchange relations presupposed much cross-linguistic communication.”⁶ Thus people of different ethnic origins, speaking different languages, lived together in the same space and communicated with each other, borrowing from each other’s languages not only words, but also speech sounds, word-formation elements and grammatical and syntactical constructions.

This linguistic interaction, which gradually resulted in the formation of a Balkan linguistic union, must be understood as part of a much broader process of cultural interaction involving all aspects of “culture” in the broad anthropological sense of the word. The commonality of grammatical features and developments among Balkan languages can be taken as a reasonable indication of the presence of social and cultural modes of convergence—even though a corresponding communal awareness might be absent. An intensive process of mutual exchange of material and spiritual goods, characterized by “contamination,” “hybridization” or—to use a less connotative term—“osmosis” must have taken place along channels paralleling those of linguistic contact. Similarities are found, for instance, in Balkan folk customs, popular beliefs, folk music, fairy tales and popular art, originating from Slavic, Greek and Romance matrices that subsequently merged into common Balkan cultural property and constitute a “Balkan *cultural* union.”⁷ As early as 1915, August Leskien noted in the introduction to his collection of Balkan fairy tales that

It is hardly possible to make a selection of fairy tales of Serbo-Croats, Bulgarians and Albanians in such a way that, in terms of their subject matter and form, something exclusive to each nation is revealed. The nations of the Balkan peninsula live closely together; the language borders partly intersect in such a way that migrations of fairy tales from one nation to another inevitably take place. In Macedonia, for instance, there are Bulgarians, Serbs, Albanians, Vlachs, Greeks and Turks living next to and mixed with each other. Consequently, there are many bilingual and multilingual people; they learn a fairy tale in one of the languages they are familiar with and retell it in another language they are familiar with, and in the region the fairy tales are further distributed from mouth to mouth. In addition, the adherents of Islam among the Serbs, Bulgarians and Albanians have close relations with their Oriental co-religionists, and an Islamic people, the Turks, ruled the

⁶ Lindstedt, “Linguistic Balkanization,” 240.

⁷ See Raymond Detrez and Pieter Plas, eds., “Introduction,” *Developing Cultural Identity in the Balkans: Convergence vs. Divergence* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2005), xi–xxii.

Balkan peninsula for more than half a millennium. Thus the Oriental treasure of fairy tales penetrated here too. This transpires from the preservation of Turkish words and the Oriental color of habits and philosophies of life.

Leskien points out that “one cannot say that the way one people tells stories is significantly different from the way other peoples do” ([a]uch kann man nicht sagen, daß die Erzählungsweise des einen Volkes von der des andern auffallend verschieden sei). Only one who has a thorough knowledge of the Balkan languages would be able to observe a different phraseology, sentence structure and “key” (*Tonart*). The ballads of the return of the dead brother, of the husband at his wife’s wedding, and of Master Manolis (Manol, Manole) are well-known examples of the shared cultural heritage in the field of oral literature. A Master Manolis (Manol, Manole) wanting to prevent his construction from crumbling down and immuring his wife as a sacrifice is the hero of folk songs pertaining to the fortress of Shkodër in Albania, the bridges of Arta in Greece, Višegrad in Bosnia and Bjala in Bulgaria, the monastery church of Curtea de Argeş in Romania and many others. These ballads belong to a common Balkan cultural heritage, testifying to common Balkan attitudes to craftsmanship, duty, magic and women.

Stoyan Dzhudzhev drew attention to such similarities in Balkan folk music as asymmetric rhythms and dia- or polyphony as an indication of the cultural unity of the Balkans. Proceeding from the idea of the homogeneity of Balkan ethnic music, he deals with local variants as “styles” or “dialects”:

The comparative investigations of the folklore of the Balkan countries reveal surprising parallels and coincidences among all Balkan peoples—Serbs, Greeks, Bulgarians, Albanians, Romanians and others—in the field of rhythm and mode, in the ornamentation, in structure and form, in the cadences and melodic stereotypes, in the tonal, modal, rhythmic and morphological functions of the elements of the melody. One also discovers coincidences and parallels in the subject matter, the characters of the heroes, the plots of the popular epics and fairy tales of these same peoples (master Manol, Marko Kraljević, the immured bride, the dead brother, the evil mother-in-law, etc.), in the dance movements, the rhythms, the steps and figures (the *căluşari* and *rusalii* dances), in the dances and customs during the holidays of the solar calendar (Christmas customs, spring swings on Gergyovden, dances and customs on Vrabnitsa, “Lazaruvane,” etc.). Later investigations reveal coincidences and parallels in the versification and the poetic metrics (for instance, the affirmation of the syllabic principle and syllabic parity in the verses and the occurrence of such metric forms in the poetry of most Balkan peoples); in folk beliefs and religious and magic rituals, in the funeral and

wedding customs (for instance, the *kurbans* or sacrifices, the offering of food and wine to the dead); in the paremiology of almost all Balkan peoples (for instance, the same or similar proverbs and sayings, stereotypical expressions concerning certain vices and virtues, marriage, labor, everyday life, etc.).

All these coincidences and parallels constitute one single common substratum, which remains more or less stable amidst the diversity and changeability of forms and styles.⁸

In addition to cultural interaction, Dzhudzhev attaches great importance to the legacy of ancient (Thracian, Hellenic) musical traditions and to the influences of Eastern (Arab, Persian, Turkish) music, together with the contribution of the Roma as performers, distributors and “contaminators” of Balkan popular music. Exploring the Balkan way of experiencing time and space, Tat’yana Tsiv’yan described the Balkan perception of time as a combination of staticness, linearity and cyclicity, which is visually represented in the meander-like decorations on pottery and tissues and in the specific circular or serpentine form and the meandering movements of the legs during the performance of the *horo* (Bulgarian, Greek, Romanian), *kolo* (Serbo-Croat) and *valle* (Albanian).⁹

As both Leskien and Dzhudzhev suggest, on the level of oral literature and ethnic music, cultural interaction crossed religious boundaries; cultural goods are shared by Christians and Muslims alike. At the level of popular beliefs, many instances of religious syncretism can be observed. Frederick Hasluck’s *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans* offers a monumental survey of shared popular beliefs, shared places of pilgrimage and worship (Christian sanctuaries frequented by Muslims and Muslim sanctuaries frequented by Christians), Bektaşīye *tekkes* visited by both Muslims and Christians, phenomena like the veneration of Saint Nicolas (identified with the Bektaşīye “saint” Sarı Saltık), instances of crypto-Christianism, and so on.¹⁰ Recently Ger Duijzings has described many more examples of religious syncretism among Muslims, Orthodox Christians and Catholics in Kosovo, showing how blurred ethnic and confessional boundaries in the Balkans may be.¹¹ The *modus vivendi* between religions and ethnic groups seems to have been based mainly on pragmatism:

⁸ Stoyan Dzhudzhev, *Muzikografski eseta i studii* (Sofia: Muzika, 1977), 108–109.

⁹ Tat’yana Tsiv’yan, *Model’ mira i eë lingvisticheskiye osnovy* (Moscow: URSS, 2006), 71–75.

¹⁰ Frederick W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, 2 vols., ed. Margaret M. Hasluck (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929).

¹¹ Ger Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo* (London: Hurst and Company, 2000).

The oldest generation from Western Macedonia remembers when Christians and Muslims would live under the same roof as part of the same extended family. Before the Mürszteg [sic] agreement of 2/3 October 1903, only Muslims could serve as gendarmes, and such officials had significant power at the local level (cf. Skendi 1968: 203, 207, 253). In Christian families, therefore, it was not uncommon for one brother to convert to Islam in order to be in a position to protect the entire family. Everyone ate at a common table, and if, for example, pork were available and a *zelnik* (pie) was made, the women of the house would put pork in only half the pita and both the Christian and Muslim sides of the family would eat from the same pan. On the other hand, marriages have always been freely contracted along religious lines but across linguistic ones. The children of such “mixed” marriages would grow up bi- or multi-lingual. In recent times, when faced with the necessity of choosing a nationality, choices can follow gender lines, e.g. if a Turkish man marries an Albanian woman, the sons may be Turks and the daughters Albanian, while in other families the choice may be for one son to be Albanian and one to be Turkish.¹²

Although these phenomena remained very much at the periphery of religious practice and in general did not affect basic feelings of religious identity—one married within his or her religious community, and it was always relatively easy to politically mobilize people along religious lines—they nevertheless show that at grassroots level, even the boundaries between religious communities were more porous than is generally assumed.

Probably the most significant indication of the existence of a Balkan cultural community at the level of low culture is the presence of a shared moral value system. Tsiv’yan drew attention to the traditional lifestyle of the Balkan herders, whose coexistence with their flocks was not only a question of economic survival but also produced a specific pastoral spiritual culture, marked by conservatism and valor.¹³ In his *Balkan Worlds*, Traian Stoianovich attempted to define the Balkan “dominant personal value orientations,” which determine the behavior of the inhabitants of the peninsula and their positive or negative assessment of others’ behavior. Stoianovich distinguishes two sets of positive and negative “poles.” The

¹² Victor Friedman, “Observing the Observers: Language, Ethnicity, and Power in the 1994 Macedonian Census and Beyond,” in *Toward Comprehensive Peace in Southeastern Europe: Conflict Prevention in the South Balkans*, ed. Barnett Rubin (New York: Council on Foreign Relations/Twentieth Century Fund, 1996), 81105, 119126, accessed December 10, 2010, http://newbalkanpolitics.org.mk/OldSite/Issue_3/friedman.eng.asp. Friedman refers to Stavro Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening, 1878–1912* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968).

¹³ Tsiv’yan, *Model’ mira*, 82.

positive poles are, according to Stoianovich, “honor and glory” (Greek *time*, *philotimo*; Slavic *čast*, *slava*, *poštenje*), “philanthropy, good deeds” (*philanthropia*; *dobro delo*), “virility, nobility, humanity” (*arete*, *andreia*; *junaštvo*); the negative poles are “shame, humility” (*entropē*, *sramota*), “ritual inadequacy, guilt” (*hamartia*; *grehota*) and “wanton violence, excessive pride, inhumanity” (*hybris*; *ljutina*, *nečoveštvo*, *inat*). Stoianovich concludes:

Three dominant personality value orientations have characterized Balkan society for several thousand years; shame, guilt, and courage, or views hieropolitical, sacral, and heroic. (...) [E]ach of these value orientations is bipolar. The negative pole sometimes is the feminine pole. Some of the negative qualities thus may have been thought to be becoming in, or “natural” to, a woman. By and large, however, males were expected to behave—although they often failed to do so—in terms of a positive pole. (...)

Two expressions—*svetao obraz* and *crn obraz*—recur in Serbian heroic poetry, the chief vehicle of the courage culture. They denote, respectively, a face of illustrious reputation or a tarnished face. For the Balkan populations, Slavic and non-Slavic alike, the face was “the focus of honor.” (...) The focus of a man’s honor if he and his family were honorable, the “face” became the focus of his shame if he or his family betrayed a trust or violated the folk culture.¹⁴

The value orientations Stoianovich describes are typical of the patriarchal “pastoral spiritual culture” Tsiv’yan referred to. It may look rather obsolete and outlandish now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In the past as well it was adhered to by only part of Balkan society, in particular by the peasants and herdsmen in the mountainous areas. Besides this patriarchal value system, there existed another, “petty bourgeois” value system, kept in esteem by the craftsmen and traders in the cities and called the *charshiya* or “Balkano-Byzantine” (*balkanobyzantinische*) system. Jozef Matl defines it—rather deprecatingly—as follows:

Life among all “nations” and “faiths” (there is no distinction between the two) is thoroughly petty bourgeois, narrow-minded, provincial, devout, averse to anything spiritual, corroded from within by profit-seeking and miserliness, and—despite all virtuous paternal morals, courteousness, respectfulness to age and office, devoutness and sexual morality—also often false and dishonest in commercial transactions. The ideal and the meaning of life is the *rabota*, the business. One should, however, not disregard the good qualities of the old Balkan culture and its undeniable material and spiritual values which have become a part of the modern national cultures of the South Slav nations: its domestic intimacy, its politeness, its commercial adequacy, its

¹⁴ Traian Stoianovich, *Balkan Worlds: The First and the Last Europe* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), 48–49. (Greek words are transcribed here according to Stoianovich.)

mostly impeccable family morals, its political and human wisdom, its adaptability, its preserving the continuity of an admittedly degenerated, but in its time still respectable culture.¹⁵

Due to the rural character of most Balkan cities, patriarchal values were somewhat relevant to traders and craftsmen too. In any case, important to my argument is that both systems were distributed along vocational and not along ethnic lines, and they could be found all over the Balkan peninsula, among all ethnic and religious groups. In that way, *both* were common Balkan value systems.

It is hard to re-establish the concrete sociohistorical conditions surrounding the processes of convergence that resulted in the emergence of a Balkan cultural community at the level of popular culture. Processes of ethno-cultural interaction occurred unnoticed by the medieval chroniclers, whose interest was characteristically limited to the “great” historical events of their time like battles, conquests, treaties and dynastic changes. Information on everyday cultural life in the Balkans provided by Western travelers in the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries is scant. It is true that Balkan ethnography, since its rise as a discrete scholarly discipline by the end of the nineteenth century, has left vast amounts of textual source materials on regional folk culture, religion, language and oral literature. However, ethnographers as a rule have tended to focus on ethnic purity and continuity rather than on interaction, hybridization and change. Only recent anthropological research has produced a more or less comprehensive understanding of *contemporary* processes of ethno-cultural interaction and identity formation and has provided us with new methodological and interpretative tools for historical research. Much of that research still remains to be done, though.

For the time being, the most inspiring theoretical model for a historical study of cultural convergence in the Balkans remains linguistics. Balkan linguistics enables us to define a “Balkan cultural union” in terms of “Balkanisms” referring to aspects of Balkan culture other than language. Proceeding from the “dialectological” analogy between linguistic and ethno-cultural phenomena, ethnolinguists have proposed the idea of a common Balkan cultural heritage that is “dialectologically differentiated.” According to Nikita Tolstoy, “from a scholarly point of view and in the perception of its bearers, the people’s language, dialects, popular customs and beliefs and the entire spiritual culture, together with elements of the

¹⁵ Josef Matl, *Die Kultur der Südslawen* (Frankfurt am Main: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1966), 34–35. (Handbuch der Kulturgeschichte, 101–105)

material culture included in it, represent a whole. (...) A dialect (be it a macro- or a microdialect) does not represent only a linguistic territorial entity, but also an ethnographical and culturological one, if we should separate popular spiritual culture from its ethnographical framework.”¹⁶ Semiotic approaches have exploited the postulated similarity between language and culture as sign systems and linked linguistics with literature and folklore studies, providing another legitimate basis to speak of a “Balkan cultural union” based on “cultural Balkanisms” as determinative and constitutive elements. This is very much how Dagmar Burkhart approaches Balkan folklore and literature in her collection of comparative and interdisciplinary studies with the significant title *Kulturraum Balkan* (the Balkan cultural space). She defines the goal of Balkanology as the study of “Gesetzmäßigkeiten polyethnischer Wechselbeziehungen und regionaler Beschränkung auf dem Balkan.”¹⁷ Other philologists of a structural-semiotic orientation have applied structural linguistic analysis to literary and folklore data with the aim of uncovering the common psychological structures and normative categories of a “Balkan world view.” Tsiv’yan attempted in a number of studies to establish a “Balkan model of the world” (*balkanskiy model’ mira*), the world view of the *homo balcanicus* and his or her “Balkanity” (*balkanskost’*).¹⁸ She thinks that the time has finally come to proceed to the classification and the interpretation of the enormous amount of material accumulated by Balkan ethnologists, regretting that “their Sandfeld has not yet appeared.”¹⁹

Of course, we should take care not to essentialize Balkan cultural identity and should beware of perceiving the Balkans as a perennial and unchangeable entity that is culturally (too) homogeneous and (too) isolated from adjacent regions. The cultural features we find in the Balkans can probably be found everywhere and are in fact “universal”; however, as Tsiv’yan emphasizes, “they are realized in a clear, sharp, particular, Balkan form.”²⁰ On the other hand, just as the process of linguistic convergence

¹⁶ Nikita I. Tolstoy, *Yazyk i narodnaya kul’tura. Ocherki po slavyanskoy mifologii i ètno-lingvistike* (Moscow: Idrrik, 1995), 21.

¹⁷ Dagmar Burkhart, *Kulturraum Balkan* (Berlin and Hamburg: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1989), 11.

¹⁸ Tsiv’yan dedicated three monographs to this subject: *Lingvisticheskiye osnovy balkanskoy modeli mira* (Moscow: URSS, 1990), reprinted in a revised and enlarged version as Tsiv’yan, *Model’ mira*, and *Dvizheniye i put’ v balkanskoy modeli mira*, (Moscow: Idrrik 1999). Here I quote Tsiv’yan, *Model’ mira*, 4.

¹⁹ Tsiv’yan, *Model’ mira*, 64. Tsiv’yan refers to Sandfeld’s *Linguistique balkanique*, which summarized the achievements of Balkan linguistics up to that point and served as a work of reference for further research.

²⁰ Tsiv’yan, *Model’ mira*, 67.

did not ultimately result in the emergence of one single Balkan language—according to Vladimir Georgiev, we deal with “l’évolution de langues différentes vers une intégration, arrêtée à mi-chemin”²¹—Balkan culture should not be conceived of as uniform. The differences, however, are of a regional rather than of an “ethnic,” let alone “national” nature. The distribution of cultural features does not coincide with ethnic boundaries; either these features are limited to only a part of the territory occupied by a given ethnic community, or—more often—they are shared by more than one ethnic community (partly or entirely). Good examples are the *nestinarki/anastenarides*, shared by Bulgarians and Greeks but not by all Bulgarians and Greeks, and the particular customs and habits (*zakons*) shared by the *brđani* (mountaineers) in Montenegro and the *malësore* in northern Albania. Tsiv’yan also seems to prefer the term “local differences” (*mestnyye razlichiya*) over “national specificity” (*natsional’naya spetsifika*), situating the latter “on a rather elevated level,” that means, on the level of high culture.²²

The national differences tend to be “fixed” by scholars, Tsiv’yan notes elsewhere, and their bearers eagerly cling to them; however, they do not prevent people in the Balkans from feeling that they belong to a solid unity that distinguishes them from the outside, “non-Balkan” world.²³ An interesting illustration is the pan-Balkan, only slightly “nationally” differentiated popular music, named *chalga* in Bulgaria, *manele* in Romania and *turbofolk* in Serbia, which—since bad taste is also a sort of taste—is an eloquent expression of pan-Balkan aesthetic values.²⁴ Reportedly, an intensive exchange of music and lyrics takes place between the performers of this kind of music. It is felt to be “our music” by a Balkan multi-ethnic audience (whose members are well aware of their respective national identities and may even be fierce nationalists), and it has proved to be very recognizably “Balkan” outside the Balkans. Thus especially at the level of low culture, the processes of cultural convergence—or rather the results of former cultural convergence—are quite persistent.

²¹ Vladimir Georgiev, “État actuel des études balkaniques : la linguistique balkanique,” *Actes du Premier congrès international des études balkaniques et sud-est européennes*, vol. 2 (Sofia: BAN, 1968), 438.

²² Tsiv’yan, *Model’ mira*, 70.

²³ *Ibid.*, 66.

²⁴ Speranța Rădulescu, “Musique de métissage pan-balkanique en Roumanie,” *Cahiers de musiques traditionnelles* 13 (2000): 151–162; Rozmari Statelova, *Sedemte gryaha na chalgata* (Sofia: Prosveta, 2005); Donna Buchanan, ed., *Balkan Popular Culture and Ottoman Ecumene: Music, Image and Regional Political Discourse* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2007).

* * *

The "Romaic Community"

The popular culture (or *Tiefkultur*) I described above emerged as a result of age-old processes of cultural convergence. It was shared by all inhabitants of the Balkan peninsula, regardless of their religious affiliation. Because of its omnipresence across the region and the absence of significant "others," its bearers were largely unaware of it, and therefore it did not serve as an effective, mobilizing and differentiating distinctive feature of the group. If we look for collectivities displaying a higher degree of communal awareness, coherence and solidarity, there appear to be several possibilities: the (extended) family or clan, the homeland community, the social class, the status group, the professional group, the ethnic community, the religious community.²⁵ Although one's affiliation with one of the first five groups may have had a far greater impact on his or her everyday life, the identification with an ethnic or a religious community is obviously of greater historical relevance.

So far, Balkan history has been investigated—by foreign historians as well—mainly from a nineteenth-century ethnocentric standpoint, focusing on the fortunes of nations through the ages or even proceeding from the primordialist assumption of ethno-cultural continuity from prehistory to the present day. According to these views, religion is nothing more than a mere component—although admittedly a very important component—of ethnic identity. Loyalty to one's religion is regarded as an expression of loyalty to one's ethnic community.²⁶

However, an increasing number of historians agree that prior to the nineteenth century, people in the Balkans identified themselves primarily with a religious and not with an ethnic community. Dennis Hupchick, who in *The Bulgarians in the Seventeenth Century: Slavic Orthodox Society and*

²⁵ Desislava Lilova writes that "to the Bulgarians in the Ottoman Empire, the answer to the question 'Who am I' necessarily begins with the sentence 'I am a Christian,' and afterwards one may add details about his name, his native place, his family, his *rod* [ethnic descent]." Desislava Lilova, *Vázrozhdenskite znacheníya na natsionalnoto ime* (Sofia: Prosveta, 2003), 24.

²⁶ This point of view is worded literally in these terms—"verskoto samosáznanie e komponent na etnichnoto" (religious self-awareness is a component of ethnic self-awareness)—and defended, though not without reservations, in Stoyan Genchev, "Bálgarskoto vázrazhdane kato etnotransformatsionen etnichen protses," in *Sbornik v chest na prof. dr. Hristo Gandev* (Sofia: BAN, 1985), 403.

Culture Under Ottoman Rule extensively studied Bulgarian pre-national society,²⁷ points out in a book on the Balkans as a whole that

[u]ntil the close of the eighteenth century, *millet* affiliation—that is, religious belief—was the fundamental source of group identity among all of the empire's subjects, demonstrating that the *millet* system possessed roots far deeper than simply Islamic concepts of religious toleration.²⁸

And returning to the issue a few pages later, he states that

Pre-Ottoman medieval tradition, Islamic theocracy, and the Ottoman *millet* system ingrained religion—not ethnicity—as fundamental in shaping individual and group self-identities. With certain exceptions, there existed among the Ottoman Balkan populations only the most rudimentary sense of ethnic awareness based on vernacular language. (...) Such “ethnic” group awareness played only a minor role in the daily lives of most Ottoman Balkan subjects before the close of the eighteenth century.²⁹

On the level of high culture (or *Hochkultur*), the inhabitants of the Balkans identified themselves with religious communities, religion being the basic organizing principle of their perception of the world, their moral values and their relations with others. But although the dominance of religious group identity in the pre-national(ist) Balkans is currently accepted by most historians as a basic assumption, it still awaits an accurate definition. In *An Orthodox Commonwealth: Symbolic Legacies and Cultural Encounters in Southeastern Europe*, Paschalis Kitromilides collects a number of inspiring case studies and analyses, setting out the guidelines for further investigation.³⁰ According to Kitromilides, Balkan Orthodox Christianity was the basis of a “Balkan mentality,” which was shared by Albanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Romanians, Serbs and other Orthodox Christians, and as a result of a long and complex process of cultural convergence, acquired its final shape in the eighteenth century. By the same token, I attempted to describe the Orthodox Christian community in the Balkans in terms of what Anthony Smith and Eric Hobsbawm respectively call “an *ethnie*” or

²⁷ Dennis P. Hupchick, *The Bulgarians in the Seventeenth Century: Slavic Orthodox Society and Culture Under Ottoman Rule* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh, 1986).

²⁸ Dennis P. Hupchick, *The Balkans from Constantinople to Communism* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 134–135.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 144.

³⁰ Paschalis Kitromilides, *An Orthodox Commonwealth: Symbolic Legacies and Cultural Encounters in Southeastern Europe* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate/Variorum, 2007).

“a popular proto-nation”³¹—with the reservation that the Orthodox Christian community in the Ottoman Empire, which for the sake of brevity I have named “Romaic community,”³² was in fact a multiethnic or supra-ethnic community, unlike the (mono)ethnic proto-nation considered by Smith and Hobsbawm.³³

The Patriarchate of Constantinople

Obviously, the psychological makeup of the Orthodox Christians (of whatever ethnic origin) in the Ottoman Empire was molded by the political, economic and social conditions created by that state. For dogmatic and pragmatic reasons, the Ottomans ignored ethnic distinctions and dealt with their non-Muslim subjects as members of separate autonomous religious communities called *millets* in the nineteenth century, enabling them to organize their lives according their own “laws” and to coexist peacefully with each other and with the Muslims, in spite of the many forms of religious discrimination.³⁴ Without the *millet* system, which forced all Orthodox Christians in the empire to share a single autonomous ecclesiastical organization while protecting them from massive Islamization, a Romaic community would never have come into being.

The ecclesiastical institution that played a decisive role in the formation of the Romaic community was the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Given its considerable autonomy in matters of administration, jurisdiction, taxation and culture, the Patriarchate had an overall and similar impact on the daily life of all Orthodox Christians—much more, actually,

³¹ Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 46–79; Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988, 73.

³² The terms “Romaean” and “Romaic” derive from Greek *Romaïos* or *Romios* and Slav *romey*, which under Ottoman rule (also) meant “Orthodox Christian of whatever ethnic origin” (see below).

³³ Raymond Detrez, “Understanding the Pre-National(ist) Balkans: The ‘Romaic’ Community,” in *Greek-Bulgarian Relations in the Age of the National Identity Formation* (Athens: Institute for Neohellenic Research, 2010), 21–70. In the present contribution, I elaborate on the argument developed in that article. Emanuel Turczynski introduced the interesting term *Konfessions-Nationalität* to signify “a religious ethnic nationality.” (Emanuel Turczynski, “The Role of the Orthodox Church in Adapting and Transforming the Western Enlightenment in Southeastern Europe,” *East European Quarterly* 9 (2001), no. 4: 417.) However, his use of this term seems to pertain only to monoethnic communities too.

³⁴ In fact, *millet* was introduced as an official term only in the nineteenth century. Previously, *taifye*, a general term for all kinds of communities, was more common. (Daniel Goffman, “Ottoman *Millets* in the Early Seventeenth Century,” *New Perspectives on Turkey* 11 [1994]: 135–158.)

than the Ottoman government as such. The Patriarchate of Constantinople—along with the Autocephalous Archbishopric of Ohrid and the Serbian Patriarchate of Peć—imposed upon the entire flock the same Orthodox Christian doctrine, the same liturgical texts and rites (although sometimes in various languages) and the same Christian moral values. Mount Athos served as the spiritual center for all Orthodox Christians. They celebrated the same religious feasts on the same day; fasted together at the same time; were baptized, married and buried in the same way; and bore the same Christian names.³⁵ They all believed in the same prophecies, inspired by the Ottoman invasion, foretelling the end of times and the salvation by a “blond people” from the North.³⁶ Liberation was instead understood by all of them in the religious sense of salvation and redemption rather than in the political sense of national independence.³⁷ They used the same churches and monasteries and shared the same places of pilgrimage—whether local or as far away as the Holy Land. Lilova, applying Hobsbawm’s concept of “popular proto-nationalism” to the Romaic community, points out that

[s]acral geography also formats the collective imagination. The more a territory is marked by the temples of the Christian God, the more distinctly the sphere of “the own” is visualized. The more often the portraits of patriarchs and bishops as church-donors (*ktitores*) are painted, the stronger is the identification with the otherwise remote and alien upper strata of the institution.³⁸

The Patriarchate deliberately attempted to erase ethnic distinctions in order to create one single coherent and ethnically undifferentiated Orthodox community likely to be able to resist more effectively the threat—or the temptation—of Islam.³⁹ For that reason, the Patriarchate ensured that the ethnic identity of the “new martyrs” was not specified in the *vitae*, so

³⁵ Paschalis Kitromilides, “‘Balkan Mentality’: History, Legend, Imagination,” in Kitromilides, *An Orthodox Commonwealth*, vol. 1, 177–179; Paschalis Kitromilides, “Orthodox Culture and Collective Identity in the Ottoman Balkans During the Eighteenth Century,” in Kitromilides, *An Orthodox Commonwealth*, vol. 2, 136.

³⁶ Nadya Danova, *Natsionalniyat vāpros v grātskite politicheski programi prez XIX vek* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1980), 32; Vasilka Tāpkova-Zaimova and Anisava Miltenova, “‘Prorochestvata’ vāv vizantiyskata i v starobālgarskata knižnina,” *Palaeobulgarica* 8 (1984) 3: 30–31.

³⁷ Victor Roudometof, “From *Rum Millet* to Greek Nation: Enlightenment, Secularization, and National Identity in Ottoman Balkan Society, 1453–1821,” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 16 (1998), 18.

³⁸ Lilova, *Vāzrozhdenskite imena*, 31.

³⁹ Tsvetana Georgieva, “Soderzhanie i funktsii ètnonima ‘bolgary’ v usloviyah osmanskogo vladychestva,” *Bulgarian Historical Review* 11 (1983), 2: 43, 48; Olga Todorova, *Pravoslavnata*

they could be venerated by the entire Romaic community.⁴⁰ "The idea of an ecumenical Orthodox Christianity," writes Makarova, "not of denationalization, but of equality of all Orthodox Christian peoples before God and the patriarchal throne, guided the activities of the Patriarchate of Constantinople until the nineteenth century."⁴¹

Significantly, Catholicism was fought by the Orthodox clergy with even more fervor than Islam, although the threat of Catholicism for most of this time was almost nonexistent.⁴² In spite of their ethnic kinship, Catholic Bulgarians were unequivocally considered "others." In practice, the rift between Orthodox and Catholic Bulgarians (or "Paulicians") appears to have been just as deep as that between Orthodox and Muslim Bulgarians. In nineteenth-century Plovdiv, which had a considerable Catholic Bulgarian presence, marriages between Orthodox and Catholic Bulgarians were as rare as marriages between Orthodox Christians and Muslims, while marriages between Orthodox Bulgarians and Greeks were common.⁴³ Orthodox Christian Bulgarians participated in suppressing the uprising of the overwhelmingly Catholic population of Chiprovtsi in 1688, because they preferred, as the Franciscan historian Blasius Kleiner noted, "the Turkish sultan over the Catholic emperor."⁴⁴ In the same way, Bulgarian Muslims helped suppress the April Uprising in 1876.

On the other hand, in spite of the strong feelings of solidarity and unity with Orthodox Christians abroad, apparently only Orthodox Christians living *within* the Ottoman Empire (including the Romanian vassal states) were regarded as members of the Romaic community. It was the Ottoman institutional context, more specifically the Patriarchate of Constantinople, that molded the Romaic community and made it different from other Orthodox Christian communities, such as the Russian. From the 1440s onwards Russia had its own separate ecclesiastical organization,

tsărkva i bălgarite, XV–XVII vek (Sofia: Marin Drinov, 1997), 265; Irina Makarova, *Bolgarskiy narod, v XV–XVIII vv. Ėtnokul'turnoe issledovanie* (Moscow: URSS, 2005), 93.

⁴⁰ Makarova, *Bolgarskiy narod*, 94.

⁴¹ Irina Makarova, "U istochnikov duhovnogo vozrozhdeniya (bolgary pod vlast'yu Konstantinopol'skogo patriarha)," in *Istoriya Balkan. Vosemnadsatyy vek*, ed. Vladlen N. Vinogradov (Moscow: Nauka, 2004), 270–271.

⁴² Vladan Đorđević, *Grčka i srpska prosveta* (Belgrade: Državna štamparija Kraljevine Srbije, 1896), 115–116.

⁴³ Raymond Detrez, "Relations between Greeks and Bulgarians in the Pre-Nationalist Era: The *Gudilas* in Plovdiv," in *Greece and the Balkans: Identities, Perceptions and Cultural Encounters since the Enlightenment*, ed. Dimitris Tziovas (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2003), 35.

⁴⁴ Todorova, *Pravoslavната tsărkva i bălgarite*, 249.

which held the status of a patriarchate from 1589 to 1721 and was ruled afterwards (until 1917) by a Holy Synod consisting of laymen. Although under Ottoman rule the Patriarchate of Constantinople was—as Steven Runciman phrased it—a “church in captivity,”⁴⁵ it was far more autonomous in dogmatic, juridical, financial and cultural matters than the Russian church ever was. The patriarchal clergy of Constantinople believed that Ottoman dominance was a punishment from God because of the (abortive) attempts of the Byzantine Church to reunite with the Church of Rome in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁴⁶ Similar ideas also existed in Russia but in a totally different political context and with totally different political implications. The Patriarchate of Constantinople, who was well-integrated into Ottoman society, preached acquiescence and submission; the Russian Church encouraged the tsars’ ambitions to liberate the Orthodox brethren from the “yoke” of the heathens with a view to annexing the territories they inhabited.

The “Orthodox Church” in the Balkans encompassed not only the Patriarchate of Constantinople but also the Autocephalous Archbishopric of Ohrid and the Patriarchate of Peć. Unlike the Bulgarian and the Serb patriarchates, the Autocephalous Archbishopric of Ohrid, founded by the Byzantine Emperor Basil II at the beginning of the eleventh century, was not abolished by the Ottomans after their conquest of the Balkan Peninsula, but continued to exist until 1767. Until the Patriarchate of Peć was restored in 1557, its dioceses were subordinated to the Archbishopric of Ohrid. The Patriarchate of Peć also included the dioceses of Kjustendil and Samokov in western Bulgaria. It was abolished in 1766.

The division of the Romaic community into various “churches” had a rather formal character and hardly affected the feelings of commonality and solidarity that existed among them. All these churches stuck to the same doctrine, were subordinated in the same way to the sultan, and ruled over a multiethnic flock on which none of them attempted to

⁴⁵ Steven Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968).

⁴⁶ Hans Vermeulen draws attention to the connotation of *rayah* the word “Romaean” (*Romaïos*) is reported to have had (Hans Vermeulen, “Greek Cultural Dominance among the Orthodox Population of Macedonia during the Last Period of Ottoman Rule,” in *Cultural Dominance in the Mediterranean Area*, eds. Anton Blok and Henk Driessen [Nijmegen, the Netherlands: Katholieke Universiteit, Publicatie Vakgroep Culturele Antropologie, 1984], 228). *Rayah* (“flock”) were all the subjects of the sultan who were not members of the Ottoman ruling class. Although Muslims could also be *rayah*, Christians used the word to emphasize their subordinated position in Ottoman society.

impose a particular ethnic identity. There was a regular exchange of bishops and even patriarchs between them.⁴⁷ In Wallachia, Greeks and Serbs alike occupied episcopal seats. According to Nicolae Iorga, Prince Radu the Great (1495–1508) appointed a Serb who had been patriarch of Constantinople to head the Wallachian church.⁴⁸ As Nedeljko Radosavljević remarks, the autonomy of the autocephalous churches did not imply their full estrangement from the Patriarchate of Constantinople. They were supposed not to have conflicts with each other but to collaborate on the principle of commonality and consensus. The *ferman* issued by the great vezir Mehmed Sokolović, establishing the Patriarchate of Peć, explicitly decreed that the latter would be “under the guardianship of its brother, the Patriarchate in Constantinople.”⁴⁹ A similar relation existed between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Archbishopric of Ohrid.⁵⁰ The Council of Adrianople in 1697 proclaimed the archbishops of Cyprus, Ohrid and Peć to be “an honorable triad, which was as legitimate as the foursome of patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antiochia and Jerusalem,” thus stressing the unity of “Christ’s Holy Church.”⁵¹

From the seventeenth century onwards, the Patriarchate of Constantinople started interfering more drastically in the internal affairs of the churches of Ohrid and Peć, which only contributed to the perception of the three ecclesiastical organizations constituting one entity. The Patriarchate of Peć was *de facto* ruled by Constantinople from 1739, when the Serbian patriarch Arsenije IV fled to Austria, to the Patriarchate’s abolishment in 1766.⁵² In the Archbishopric of Ohrid, Constantinople intervened for the first time in 1676, when a number of bishops complained to the patriarch about the archbishop.⁵³

⁴⁷ Todorova, *Pravoslavna tsarkva i bălgarite*, 76–77, 265.

⁴⁸ Nicolae Iorga, *Le Caractère Commun des Institutions du Sud-Est de l’Europe* (Paris: J. Gamber, 1929), 112–113. More likely, Niphon II was of Albanian origin. (Barthold Georg Niebuhr, ed., *Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae. Historia politica et patriarchica Constantinopoleos. Epirotica* (Bonn: Weber), 128, accessed December 10, 2010, http://books.google.com/books?id=a-APAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=nl&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.)

⁴⁹ Nedeljko Radosavljević, *Pravoslavna crkva u Beogradskom pašaluku 1766–1831 (uprava Vaseljenske patrijaršije)* (Belgrade: Istorijski institut, 2007), 66.

⁵⁰ Ivan Snegarov, *Istoriya na ohridskata arhiepiskopiya*, vol. 2 (Sofia: Gutenberg, 1924), 119 ff.

⁵¹ Snegarov, *Istoriya*, vol. 2, 122, quotes Konstantinos N. Sathas, *Mesaioniki vivliothiki*, vol. 3 (Venice, 1872), 405.

⁵² Kitromilides, “Orthodox Culture,” 139–141.

⁵³ Snegarov, *Istoriya*, vol. 2, 123.

To the common man, whose dealings with the church were limited to his or her contacts with the parochial priest, these different ecclesiastical hierarchies were irrelevant. Moreover, the many Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek or Vlach Orthodox Christians whose profession involved extensive traveling—traders, seasonal workers, tax collectors, people practicing transhumance, craftsmen building and painting churches, clerics and monks, pilgrims and others—living and working in the Balkans, Anatolia, the Near East and Egypt must have noticed that Orthodox Christians lived all over the empire and must also have developed an awareness of a collective supra-local space, “a geography of faith,” as Kitromilides calls it.⁵⁴

“Our” Church

Another interesting question is to what extent the Patriarchate of Constantinople was perceived by all Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire as an institution “of their own.” In Bulgarian historiography it is common practice to depict the Patriarchate as a foreign, “Greek” institution imposed on Bulgarians and other non-Greek Orthodox Christians as a “second yoke” (the first being the Turkish one). However, the abolition of the Bulgarian Patriarchate of Tărnovo and its submission to the Patriarchate of Constantinople sometime in the first half of the fifteenth century does not seem to have occurred against the will of the Bulgarians.⁵⁵ In the fourteenth century, Byzantine cultural influence in Bulgaria was paramount, and the leading role of Constantinople in the Christian world was uncontested. According to Yurdan Trifonov, the Bulgarians were expecting that Byzantium—which had not yet been completely conquered by the Ottomans—would help them regain their sovereignty.⁵⁶ Earlier, the Bulgarian principalities of Dobruzha and Vidin, which had broken away from the Bulgarian Empire in the 1330s and the 1360s, respectively, had voluntarily submitted their dioceses to the authority of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, seeking Byzantine support against Tărnovo. Although taken for tactical reasons, these decisions nevertheless indicate that the

⁵⁴ Kitromilides, “Balkan Mentality,” 180.

⁵⁵ Todorova, *Pravoslavната tsărkva i bălgarite*, 40–46.

⁵⁶ Yurdan Trifonov, “Unishtozhavaneto na Tărnovskata patriarshiya i zamestyaneto i s avtonomno mitropolitstvo-arhiepiskopstvo,” in *Sbornik za narodni umotvoreniya, nauka i knizhnina* 22–23 (1906–1907): 2–40, accessed December 10, 2010, http://liternet.bg/publish17/iu_trifonov/izbrani/unishtozhavaneto.htm.

idea of Bulgarian Orthodox Christians being ruled by the Patriarch of Constantinople was not at all considered undesirable.

Bulgarian anti-clerical sentiments are often explained as anti-Greek sentiments, surfacing whenever Bulgarians, allegedly anxious about their Bulgarian ethnic identity, experienced "Greek" ecclesiastical domination and exploitation. However, as Richard Clogg points out, quoting William Gell's *Narrative of a Journey in the Morea* (London, 1823), the Greeks themselves thought that "the country labors under three curses, the priests, the *kozabasides*, and the Turks; always placing the plagues in this order."⁵⁷ Their perception does not differ essentially from the Bulgarian concept of the "dual yoke." The faithful—Bulgarians and Greeks alike—often demanded the replacement of an "unworthy" (*nedostoen, anaxios*) bishop with another. Conflicts between the common parishioners, often represented by their priests, and the higher clergy were in fact a common phenomenon throughout the entire Ottoman Orthodox Christian community.⁵⁸ From the 1820s onwards, the Bulgarians in such cases would insist upon the replacement of the "Greek" bishop with a Bulgarian one, but this was not, by any means, always the main issue. Bulgarians, Greeks and Vlachs joined their efforts in protesting against Bishop Venediktos in Bitola in 1860, their chief demand being the right to supervise the accounts of the bishopric.⁵⁹ "Prior to the 1820s," Hristo Gandev concludes, "one cannot discern any forces that would alienate the Bulgarians from the Greek church and the Greek language."⁶⁰

When one part of the faithful demanded a bishop's dismissal, very often the other part would continue to support him. In such cases supporters and opponents of the bishops could be found among Greek and Bulgarian notables alike.⁶¹ Referring to G.F. Abbot's *The Tale of a Tour in Macedonia* (London, 1903), Hans Vermeulen emphasizes that "[t]he division between the Greek party and the Slav party in Slav villages was similar to that of 'the bishop's friends and the bishop's foes' in Greek villages," adding that

⁵⁷ Richard Clogg, "Anti-Clericalism in Pre-Independence Greece, c. 1750–1821," in Richard Clogg, *Anatolica: Studies in the Greek East in the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate / Variorum, 1996), chapter 8, 349.

⁵⁸ Iorga, *Le Caractère Commun*, 110–111.

⁵⁹ Bernard Lory, "La ville balkanissime. Bitola 1800–1918" (Habilitation thesis, Paris: Université de Paris I—Panthéon-Sorbonne), 205, 231–232.

⁶⁰ Hristo Gandev, *Problemi na Bălgarskoto Văzrazhdane* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1976), 79.

⁶¹ Such a situation in Ohrid is described by Shapkarev, *Za vāzrazhdaneto*, 52–53, 77, 104.

“there was one important difference: these conflicts were not translated into or reinforced by nationalist sentiments.”⁶² In fact, the conflict was often between the old (Graecophone) urban establishment, consisting of Greeks and Bulgarians, and the Bulgarian immigrants from the neighboring villages. From the 1840s onwards, when such conflicts between Bulgarian and Greek parties became more frequent, the Patriarchal clergy often avoided taking sides and tried to mediate. A good example is the zigzag policy of the metropolitans Chrysanthos/Hrisant and Paisios/Paisii during the “church struggle” in Plovdiv in the 1850s and 1860s.⁶³

The Patriarchate of Constantinople neither presented itself as a Greek church nor behaved as one. Steering a middle course between its traditional loyalty to the Ottoman government, its ecumenical mission and its material interests, the Patriarchate, like the Ottoman government, was rather indifferent regarding ethnic issues and did not pursue a policy of ethnic assimilation—a conclusion made by Yordan Ivanov as early as 1911, by Gandevev in the 1940s and by many others.⁶⁴ Prior to the eighteenth century, divine services in Church Slavonic seem to have been predominant in the Bulgarian lands.⁶⁵ Patriarchal bishops of ethnic Greek origin, who occupied the seats of the Serbian dioceses on the eve of and after the abolition of the Patriarchate of Peć, often spoke and wrote Serbian and celebrated the divine services in Serbian.⁶⁶ Even at the beginning of the nineteenth century in Ohrid, an important and reportedly thoroughly Hellenized episcopal seat in the immediate proximity of the Greek ethnic zone, the Greek metropolitans attended services in Church Slavonic, corresponded with Slavic village priests in Slavic, inaugurated Bulgarian schools and so on.⁶⁷ Olga Todorova characterizes the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries as the “most cosmopolitan period” in the history of the Patriarchate. She points out that “the foreign metropolitans and

⁶² Vermeulen, “Greek Cultural Dominance,” 245.

⁶³ Petăr Nikov, *Văzrazhdane na bălgarskiya narod. Tsărkovno-natsionalni borbi i postizheniya* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1971), 131–133, 229–230.

⁶⁴ Yordan Ivanov, “Grătsko-bălgarski otnosheniya predi tsărkovnata borba,” in Yordan Ivanov, *Izbrani proizvedeniya*, vol. 1 (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1982), 157–182; Gandevev, *Problemi*, 79.

⁶⁵ Makarova, *Bolgarskiy narod*, 51; Todorova, *Pravoslavната tsărkva i bălgarite*, 267.

⁶⁶ Nedeljko Radosavljević, “Mitropolit Serafim Dabrobosnenski (dopălneniya kămu biografijata mu),” in *Istoriyata i knigite kato priyatelstvo. Sbornik v pamet na Mitko Lachev*, ed. Nadya Danova et al. (Sofia: Gutenberg, 2007), 219.

⁶⁷ Kuzman Shapkarev, “Nyakolko kriticheski belezhki vărhu obnarodvanite do sega materiyali po istoriyata na văzrazhdanieto na bălgarshtinata v Makedoniya,” part 3, *Bălgarski pregled* 2 (1895), no. 9–10: 276–277.

bishops (Greeks, Hellenized Albanians, Serbs, and others) did not obstruct the Slavonic services in the Bulgarian churches, neither did they prohibit the veneration of the traditional Bulgarian saints.”⁶⁸ The Patriarchate encouraged or at least tolerated the publication of translations and original works in languages other than Greek. In 1680, under the Phanariote *hospodar* Șerban Cantacuzino (1678–1688), the complete Bible was translated into Romanian by Orthodox priests and layman. In the same period, in spite of the rising Greek cultural influence in the principalities, Church Slavonic as a liturgical language was replaced by Romanian and not by Greek—an innovation that could not have occurred without the approval of the Patriarchate. In the eighteenth century the Patriarchate took the initiative of printing liturgical books and religious literature in Turkish (using Greek characters) on behalf of the Karamans in Anatolia.⁶⁹ In 1804 Nikiforos Theotokis’s *Kyriakodromion* was published in a Bulgarian translation by Sofroniy of Vratsa as the first Bulgarian printed book.⁷⁰ To sum up, although the Patriarchate without a doubt preferred Greek to other languages in the liturgy and in church administration, it was in a “ecumenical” way a “multilingual” institution.

The patriarchal clergy was overwhelmingly, but certainly not exclusively, Greek. From 1453 to 1872 (when the Bulgarian Exarchate was founded), thirteen out of the ninety-seven ecumenical patriarchs are reported to have been of Bulgarian origin.⁷¹ Together, these “Bulgarian” patriarchs ruled over the Great Church for approximately half a century (out of four). One of them was supposedly unable to speak Greek. On the lower echelons of the church administration as well, the number of Bulgarian metropolitans and bishops must have been considerably larger than usually assumed.⁷² Nadya Danova and Apostolos Christakoudis (2003) also

⁶⁸ Olga Todorova, “Pravoslavната tsărkva v bălgarskoto sotsialno prostranstvo prez ranite stoletiya na osmanskoto vladichestvo,” in *Bălgarskata tsărkva prez vekovete*, ed. Petko Petkov (Sofia: Sv. Kliment Ohridski, 2003), 121.

⁶⁹ Kitromilides, “Balkan Mentality,” 181.

⁷⁰ Kitromilides, “Orthodox Culture,” 142. Bulgarian Catholics had printed books earlier.

⁷¹ Mihail Kolarov, “Bălgari—vselenski patriarsi,” *Izvestiya na Bălgarskata patriarshiya* 3 (1985): 179–191. Two Bulgarian patriarchs ruled in the first half of the fifteenth century, before the fall of Constantinople. Todorova, *Pravoslavната tsărkva i bălgarite*, 151, has some doubts, in particular regarding Rafail I (1475–1476), who might have been a Serb. In any case, he was not a Greek.

⁷² See Stojan Maslev, “Die Rolle der griechischen Schulen und der griechischen Literatur für die Aufklärung des bulgarischen Volkes zur Zeit der Wiedergeburt,” in *Über Beziehungen des Griechentums zum Ausland in der neueren Zeit*, eds. Johannes Irmischer

believe that representatives of the non-Greek ethnic groups in the empire held the throne in Constantinople and other posts in the ecclesiastical hierarchy.⁷³ Vlachs too occupied episcopal and patriarchal seats (though none as patriarch of Constantinople).⁷⁴

Bearing in mind the relatively tolerant—or maybe indifferent—attitude of the patriarchal authorities towards non-Greeks, we may conclude that prior to the nineteenth century, despite the fact that (ethnic) Greeks undoubtedly constituted a majority in key positions, the Patriarchate did not pursue a policy of Graecization and was largely regarded by its flock as an ethnically unaffiliated, “Romaic” institution. Even Paisiy of Hilandar admits that the Bulgarians “reverently” accepted the Greek clerics and respected them as archpriests.⁷⁵

A Common Denomination

Whatever ethnic proto-nationalism might have developed within the Balkan medieval states—the Byzantine Empire, the First and the Second Bulgarian Empires, the Serb Empire under Stefan Dušan⁷⁶—was almost completely wiped out due to the combined policies of the Ottoman sultans, who divided their subjects into religious categories without any regard for ethnic distinctions, and of the patriarchs of Constantinople, who strove to create a Romaic sense of coherence and solidarity. Bonyu Angelov, commenting on the life and work of Parteniy Pavlovich, remarks that “[t]o Pavlovich there apparently were no Bulgarians, Serbs, Vlachs and Russians, but only an Orthodox people, whose enemies are the Turks, the Catholics and others.”⁷⁷ As a result, before the nineteenth century, Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire, when asked “Who are you?” or “What are you?” seldom referred to their ethnic affiliation. As a rule, they would call themselves “Christians” (*hristiyani*).⁷⁸ In the small notes

and Marika Mineemi (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1968), 355, 356, 358, 363, 366; Todorova, *Pravoslavната tsărkva i bălgarite*, 151.

⁷³ Nadya Danova and Apostolos Christakoudis, *Istoriya na nova Gărtsiya* (Sofia: Abagar, 2003), 26.

⁷⁴ Giorgis Exarchos, *Autoi einai oi Vlachoi* (Athens: Gavriilidis, 1994), 68.

⁷⁵ Paisiy Hilendarski, *Slavyanobălgarska istoriya* (Sofia: Bălgarski pisatel, 1972), 177–178.

⁷⁶ For Greek proto-nationalism in the Byzantine Empire, see Stephen G. Xydis, “Medieval Origins of Modern Greek Nationalism,” *Balkan Studies* 11 (1970): 1–20.

⁷⁷ Bonyo Angelov, *Săvremenitsi na Paisiy* (Sofia: BAN 1964), 9.

⁷⁸ Makarova, *Bolgarskiy narod*, 93; Makarova, “U istochnikov,” 271.

added to copied or translated manuscripts, which are about the only Bulgarian “ego-documents” produced from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, Bulgarian monks and priests most often identify themselves as “Christians.” An inquiry into the notes included into the representative collection *Pisahme da se znae*⁷⁹ revealed the following frequencies of the use of the terms “Christian” or “Bulgarian” (including derivatives and combinations) from the fourteenth century through the first half of the nineteenth:

Century	14th	15th	16th	17th	18th	19th (before 1850)
“Christians”	1	1	4	6	31	22
“Bulgarians”	9	1	2	2	15	11

Thus in the period under scrutiny, the self-identification “Christians” appears twice as often as the self-identification “Bulgarians.” There are no statistical records pertaining to similar “ego-documents” in other Balkan literary traditions. However, a glance at the “Index des noms de peuples” in *Conseils et mémoires de Synadinos, prêtre de Serrès en Macédoine (XVII^e siècle)* reveals that the author referred to “Hellenes” only twice, to “Greeks” only once, to “Romaeans” only once, and to “Christians” fifty-one times.⁸⁰ As already mentioned, in the *vitae* of the Bulgarian “new martyrs,” written in the first half of the sixteenth century, the heroes are never called Bulgarians.⁸¹

Western travelers, describing the Balkans firsthand and relying on information provided by the local population, labeled all Orthodox Christians in the Balkans “Christians” or “Greeks.”⁸² These travelers had an eye for ethnic and linguistic distinctions; they were able to discern even the vague ethnic and linguistic border between Bulgarians and Serbs in the region of Niš.⁸³ Benjamin Barker, who worked as an agent for the British Bible Society, points out in his *Journal in His Tour to Adrianople, Demotica, Rodosto etc., etc.* (1823) that “both the Greek and the Bulgarian language

⁷⁹ Ventseslav Nachev and Nikola Fermandzhiev, *Pisahme da se znae* (Sofia: OF, 1984).

⁸⁰ Hélène Antoniadis-Bibicou, André Guillou and Paolo Odorico, eds., *Conseils et mémoires de Synadinos, prêtre de Serrès en Macédoine (XVII^e siècle)* (Paris: Editions de l'Association ‘Pierre Belon,’ 1996), 322.

⁸¹ Petăr Dinekov, Kuyo Kuev and Donka Petkanova, eds., *Hristomatiya po starobălgarska literatura*, 2nd ed. (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1967), 486–499.

⁸² Maria Todorova, ed., *Angliyski pātepsi za Balkanite (kraya na XVI—30-te godini na XIX v.)* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1987), 14; Dimităr Angelov, *Bălgarskata narodnost prez vekovete* (Stara Zagora: Ideya, 1994), 156.

⁸³ Georgieva, “Soderzhanie i funktsii,” 41.

are made use of for reading and writing by the Greeks of Adrianople, but in the villages on the road to Philippopoli they are better acquainted with the Bulgarian language.”⁸⁴ Baker is obviously well-informed about the linguistic situation in the region he describes and evidently uses the term “Greek” to denote not an ethnic but a religious community, one that includes the Bulgarians.

When traveling or residing outside the Ottoman Empire, Orthodox Christians of whatever ethnic origin would present themselves as “Greeks.” So did the Bulgarians in the Greek diaspora in Central Europe and Russia. Nevertheless, a distinction was made between Bulgarian ethnicity and being “a Greek” in the sense of an Orthodox Christian. A Bulgarian trader in the Russian city of Nezhin signed his testament “I, the undersigned, the Nezhin Greek (*nezhinskiy grek*) Marko Savov Hartsiz, a Bulgarian from Sofia (*bolgarin iz Sofii*). . . .”⁸⁵ Another Bulgarian who signed documents as a *nezhinski grek* was the famous Bulgarian patriot and benefactor Ivan Denkogu.⁸⁶ Vlachs also presented themselves as Greeks when abroad. In all these cases, the term “Greek” refers to Orthodox Christian traders, who were overwhelmingly but hardly exclusively of (ethnic) Greek origin. However, the religious or “ecclesiastical” component, which was crucial to their self-identification, is evident too: all members of these “Greek” communities were Orthodox Christians, originating from the Ottoman empire.

Thus Bulgarians and other Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire would use the word “Christian” or—if they were Greek-speaking traders or city-dwellers (a category to which I will return shortly)—“Greek” to denote themselves, in both cases referring to their membership in the Ottoman Orthodox Christian community, which was the essence of their identity. There was yet another term used in Greek: *Romaïos* or *Romios*, “Roman” or “Romaean.” The Byzantines called themselves *Romaïoi*, and since Orthodox Christianity was the essence of Byzantine “national” identity, the term acquired the meaning of Orthodox Christian in general after the fall of the Byzantine Empire: *Romaïos* then meant Orthodox Christian in or from

⁸⁴ Richard Clogg, “Benjamin Barker’s Journal of a Tour in Thrace,” in Richard Clogg, *Anatolica: Studies in the Greek East in the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate / Variorum, 1996), chapter 13, 253.

⁸⁵ Ogniana Madzhrakova-Chavdarova, “Daritelyat Marko Yovov i vāprosīte okolo negovoto zaveshtanie ot 1835 g., gr. Nezhin,” in Ogniana Madzhrakova-Chavdarova, *Daritelstvo i vzaimopomosht v bālgarskoto obshtestvo (XVI-nachaloto na XX v.)*, ed. Plamen Mitev (Sofia: IF-94, 2003), 118.

⁸⁶ Madzhrakova-Chavdarova, “Daritelyat Marko Yovov,” 119.

the Ottoman Empire, of whatever ethnic origin. An Orthodox Christian originating from outside the Ottoman Empire was never called a “Greek” or a “Romaeon.”⁸⁷ In his *Encheiridion peri tis eparchias Filippoupoleos*, the priest Konstantin informs his readers that “there are five kinds of inhabitants in this city [Plovdiv]: Turks, Orthodox Christians, who call themselves Romaeans (*romei*), Armenians, Manicheans, usually called Paulicians, and Jews.”⁸⁸ The poet and musician Dimitrakis Georgiadis Papasymeonidis or Dimităr Georgiev Popsimeonov, a Greek according to Greek scholarship and a Bulgarian according to Bulgarian scholarship, but most probably a *Romaïos* to himself, calls his native town Arbanasi, with its ethnically mixed Orthodox Christian population, a *Romaion katoikia*—a “settlement of Romaeans.”⁸⁹ In the chronicle of Ohrid, which pertains to events that took place between 1801 and 1843, the population of Bulgarians, Greeks and Vlachs is systematically represented in religious terms—“Romaeans” is used five times and “Christians” once, while the ethnonym “Bulgars” is used only once.⁹⁰ Lory calls the first half of the nineteenth century “the period in which the Slavophones in Macedonia perceived themselves primarily as members of the *Rum millet*, as, for instance, the frequent use of the term *Romei* in the Chronicle of Ohrid indicates. The otherness is constructed in opposition to the Muslim camp.”⁹¹

From the eighteenth century onwards, the Ottoman administration systematically used the term *rum* or *urum*, which is the Turkish word derived from *Romaïos*, to denote the entire community of Orthodox Christians in its realm. Before then, Orthodox Christians were most frequently referred to as *kâfir* or *gâvur* (infidel).⁹² Significantly, in the same period the Ottomans also started labeling the Romaic community a *millet*, that is, a (more or less coherent) community, instead of a *tayife*, which by

⁸⁷ The isolated case of a Russian patriarch being called a *romei*, referred to by Ivanova, seems to be the exception that proves the rule. (Svetlana Ivanova, “Predi da se rodi bălgarskiyat millet,” in *Dărzhava i tsărkva, tsărkva i dărzhava v bălgarskata istoriya*, ed. Ginyo Ganey et al. [Sofia: Sv. Kliment Ohridski, 2006], 157.)

⁸⁸ Konstantinos Oikonomos, *Encheiridion peri tis eparchias Filippoupoleos* (Vienna, 1819), quoted in Nadya Danova, “Bălgarite v grătskata knizhnina prez XVIII i nachaloto na XIX vek,” *Balkanistika* 1 (1986): 267.

⁸⁹ Manyo Stoyanov, *Opis na grătskite i drugi chuzhdoezichni răkopisi v Narodnata biblioteka ‘Kiril i Metodiy’* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1973), 157. See also the comments in Paschalis Kitromilides, “In the Pre-Modern Balkans . . . : Loyalties, Identities, Anachronisms,” in Kitromilides, *An Orthodox Commonwealth*, vol. 4, 26–28.

⁹⁰ Lory, “La ville balkanissime,” quotes Ljuben Lape, *Domašni izvori za makedonskata istorija*, vol. 1 (Skopje, 1951), 21, 26, 31, 32, 33.

⁹¹ Lory, “La ville balkanissime,” 206.

⁹² Ivanova, “Predi da se rodi,” 150–153.

comparison is a rather indefinite group.⁹³ Svetlana Ivanova gives a number of explanations for this remarkable relabeling, insisting on the increasing economic power of the Greeks in the Ottoman Empire and their growing visibility within the Romaic community.⁹⁴ This probably overemphasizes the ethnic factor. Why would the Ottomans, who were accustomed to dealing exclusively with religious groups, change their terminology merely because of the increasing prominence of one particular ethnic group, even before that ethnic group itself started developing a noticeable ethnic self-awareness—especially since that ethnic group, which eventually developed an ethnic self-awareness, used to call itself “Greek” or “Hellene” and not *Romaioi*? Without minimizing the leading role of (ethnic) Greeks in the economic, social and cultural transformations of that period,⁹⁵ I am inclined to believe that the new Ottoman label *rum millet*i relates to the *entire* Romaic community, which, as Kitromilides suggests, after the treaties of Karlowitz and Passarowitz (1699 and 1718 respectively) as a whole entered an era of economic and commercial expansion and of accelerated cultural convergence and consolidation—developments that could not fail to impress the Ottoman authorities.

In any case, the self-identification of all Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire as *Romaioi* was obviously quite widespread. Sir Harry Luke wrote in 1936 (!):

[But] to this day Orthodox peasants, not only in Greece, but even at times in Serbia and Bulgaria speak of themselves as “Romans” . . . The word “Roman” thus included not only the Greeks of Hellas, the islands, the capital city and the various Greek centres of Asia Minor, but also the Serbs, the Rumanians and the Bulgarians of the Balkan Peninsula and the Arab-speaking Orthodox communities of Syria, Palestine and Egypt.⁹⁶

And Peter Mackridgē notes:

At that time, however, the word *Romaioi* was often used by the Orthodox Church—and *Rum* was likewise used by the Ottoman authorities—to refer to all of the Orthodox Christian subjects of the Sublime Porte, regardless of linguistic and ethnic differences. This was also the normal way for Orthodox

⁹³ Ivanova, “Predi da se rodi,” 157–158; Goffman, “Ottoman millets.”

⁹⁴ Ivanova, “Predi da se rodi,” 178–179.

⁹⁵ See the pioneering Traian Stoianovich, “The Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant,” *Journal of Economic History* 20 (1960), June: 234–313.

⁹⁶ Harry Luke, *The Old Turkey and the New: From Byzantium to Ankara* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1955), 78, quoted by Kemal Karpat, *An Inquiry into the Social Foundations of Nationalism in the Ottoman State: From Social Estates to Classes, From Millets to Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, Center of International Studies, 1973), 1.

Christians to think of themselves, defining themselves by their differences from the members of the other chief religious communities that made up the population of the Ottoman Empire. To most Ottoman Orthodox Christians of that time, the world was divided chiefly into Romioi (Orthodox Christians [i.e. non-Armenian Ottoman Christians], among whom Greek-speakers might or might not be distinguished from Vlachs, Albanians and Bulgarians), Armenides (members of the Armenian church), Tourkoi (i.e. all of the Muslims), Ovrioi (Jews) and Frangoi (i.e. Catholics and—since the Reformation—Protestants).⁹⁷

Thus, to Bulgarians, “Romaean” could be a synonym of “Greek” to denote an ethnic Greek. However, referring to themselves, Bulgarians would use “Romaean” in the sense of “Orthodox Christian.”⁹⁸ That Bulgarians were well aware of the difference may be concluded from Petko R. Slaveykov’s remark that the Bulgarians in Plovdiv “don’t want to be Greeks (*gārtsi*), but they want to be Romaean (*rimlyani*); therefore, whomever of them I ask what he is, he answers in Greek *Ego eimai Romaïos* (I am a Romaean).”⁹⁹ When (ethnic) Greeks referred to themselves as *Romaïoi* or *Romioi*, they too thought of themselves as “Orthodox Christians” rather than as “ethnic Greeks.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Peter Mackridge, “Aspects of Language and Identity in the Greek Peninsula since the Eighteenth Century,” accessed on December 10, 2010, http://www.farsarotul.org/nl29_1.htm.

⁹⁸ The self-identification as *romey*, *Romaïos* or *rum* may have resulted from the Ottomans’ dealing with religious communities or from the patriarchal policy of promoting supra-ethnic Orthodox Christian solidarity and coherence. However, it might also date back to medieval times, when large parts of the Bulgarian people lived under Byzantine rule and were Romaean in the sense of Byzantines. Gandev remarks that “[t]he very incorporation of the Slavs in the cities under Byzantine rule into that “Romaic” (*romey-ska*) culture cannot possibly be defined historically as Hellenization—that would not be right—but as Romaicization (*romeizatsiya*); it did not concern only the Bulgarian Slavs, but also many other peoples within the empire. (. . .) We are speaking here neither about Greece with her economic, political and military potential, nor about the small Greek colonies on the coast of the Black Sea, but about the Romaicized city-dwellers (*romeizirano grazhdanstvo*) who represent and support Byzantine culture (and Byzantine culture is the equivalent neither of Classical Greek nor of medieval demotic Greek culture).” (Gandev, *Problemi*, 702.)

⁹⁹ Petko R. Slaveykov, “Prodälzhenie na Otgovora zaradi Bälgarskoto v Plovdiv uchilishte,” *Tsarigradski Vestnik*, October 13, 1851.

¹⁰⁰ From the late eighteenth century onwards, an ethnic Greek could also be called *elin* in Bulgarian, after the Greek ethnonym “*Ellin*” (“Hellene”), which in that period gained popularity among the Greeks. The claim to ancient descent, emphasized by the use of the term “Hellene,” contributed to the demise of the shared Romaic identity based on Orthodox Christianity, since Albanians, Bulgarians and other non-Greeks could not possibly make that claim. The use of *Romaïos* was considered by Adamantios Korais and others to be an offensive and humiliating reminder of Ottoman dominance. In the nineteenth century, some Bulgarians would call themselves *elin* as a synonym of *grāk* in the ethnic sense of the

Among other populations in the Balkans, the same situation existed. Thede Kahl points out that prior to the emergence of a national consciousness, the Vlachs or Aromanians called themselves *Romaioi* or *romani* (the first term of Greek origin, the second of Latin origin, both meaning “Orthodox Christians”), since the dominant aspect of their identity was their membership in the Orthodox Christian *millet*.¹⁰¹ In Romanian the ethnonym *român*, derived from Latin *Romanus*, had acquired the same meaning as Greek *Romaioi* (in the sense of Orthodox Christian). Wolfgang Dahmen, who doubts the continuity of *romanus/român* as an ethnic denomination, notes,

One might also suppose that the early identification of ROMANUS with “Christian” (as opposed to PAGANUS, which then acquired also the meaning of “non-Roman”), has contributed to the preservation of the former meaning.¹⁰²

Obviously, the Latin *Romanus* and Greek *Romaioi* shared the same semantic development from an ethnic, or rather, political community to a religious denomination. In Transylvania, *români* meant “Romanians,” but also *paysans non libres*.¹⁰³ However, as the *paysans non libres* were Orthodox Christians, while the land owners were Catholics or Protestants, the term *români* contained a strong religious semantic component as well, which probably overshadowed the ethnic one.¹⁰⁴

word. A well-known example is “Zlatkos filogenis Ellin apo Gambrovo” (“patriot Zlatko from Gabrovo”), quoted by Georgi Rakovski (Boyan Penev, *Istoriya na novata bălgarska literatura*, vol. 1 [Sofia: Bălgarski pisatel, 1976], 167). “Zlatko” is a typically Bulgarian name, and Gabrovo is a city in central Bulgaria, where there were virtually no (ethnic) Greeks. Cf. Shteliyan Shterionov, *Gărtsite po bălgarskite zemi prez XVIII-XIX vek (do 1878 g.)* (Sofia: Faber, 2008), 486. These cases obviously indicate a later, fundamental change in ethnic or national consciousness, resulting from the Bulgarians’ closeness to the (ethnic) Greeks within the Orthodox Christian community.

¹⁰¹ Thede Kahl, *Istoria aromănilor* (Bucharest: Tritonic, 2006), 119.

¹⁰² Wolfgang Dahmen, “Pro- und antiwestliche Strömungen im rumänischen Diskurs,” in *Prowestliche und antiwestlich Diskurse in den Balkanländern/Südosteuropa*, eds. Gabriella Schubert and Holm Sundhaussen (Munich: Verlag Otto Sagner, 2008), 62. For a more in-depth discussion of the continuity of *romanitate* in Romanian historiography, see Wolfgang Dahmen, “Der Romanitätsgedanke: eine Konstante in der rumänischen Geistesgeschichte?” in *Dulce et decorum est philologiam colere. Festschrift für Dietrich Briesemeister zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, vol. 3, eds. Sybille Große and Axel Schönberger (Berlin: Otto Sagner, 1999), 1799–1811.

¹⁰³ Iorga, *Le Caractère Commun*, 137.

¹⁰⁴ This religious semantic component was not always present, though. In his introduction to Alexandros Ypsilandis’s legal code of Wallachia (1780), Panagiotis I. Zepos writes that serfs in Wallachia were called *rumuni* (ρομούννοι, *rumâni*). As the landlords were Orthodox Christians as well, this means that, at least from a legal point of view, *rumâni*

It is true that to denote themselves non-Greeks did not use the terms “Greek” and *Romaïos* very frequently (unlike “Christian,” which was common), but it was even rarer for them to refer to themselves using the ethnonyms “Bulgarian,” “Greek,” “Vlach” (*Armăn*), “Albanian” (*Arnaut*) and so on. One finds these ethnonyms almost exclusively in folk songs, but even there “Christians” was used far more often.

While ethnonyms did of course refer to ethnic groups, they could also—as indicated above—be used to denote religious groups: “Greek” as a synonym of Orthodox Christian, “Turk” as a synonym of Muslim, “Frenk” or “Latin” as a synonym of Catholic.¹⁰⁵ In Bosnia, an Orthodox Christian was called “Vlach,” from which “Vlach” was actually a synonym of “Serb.”¹⁰⁶ In addition, ethnonyms frequently indicated social and vocational groups as well. This of course resulted from the typically Balkan or Ottoman “cultural division of labor.”¹⁰⁷ However, not only did ethnic affiliation determine one’s profession, but one’s profession also determined to some extent his ethnic self-identification. “Greeks” or “Romaeans” could be traders or city-dwellers, while Slav-speaking peasants were called “Bulgarians.”¹⁰⁸ In *La péninsule balkanique* Jovan Cvijić extensively elaborates on this meaning of the word *bulgarin* in Serbian and other Balkan languages, but as he was a virulent Serbian nationalist, his opinions are often considered biased.¹⁰⁹ In the same social context, “Serb” could just as well mean “Slav peasant.”¹¹⁰ In his *History of the Bulgarian Slavs* (1762), Bulgaria’s first historian and national revivalist, Paisiy of Hilandar, also contrasts poor but honest Bulgarian “diggers and ploughmen” to cultured

did not necessarily have an ethnic connotation. However, the religious connotation here is less obvious. (Panagiotis Zepos, *Syndagmaton nomikon Alexandrou Ioannou Ypsilandi Voevoda igemonos pasis Oungrovlachias* 1780 [Athens: Akadimia Athinon, 1936], 39.)

¹⁰⁵ See the poem by the Albanian Pashko Vasa: “Albanais, vous tuez vos frères,/ Vous êtes divisés en cent partis./ Certains disent : je suis chrétien, d’autres : je suis musulman,/ L’un : je suis turc, l’autre : je suis latin” (Albanians, you kill your brothers. You are divided into a hundred parties. / Some say: I am a Christian, others: I am a Muslim. / One: I am a Turk, the other: I am Catholic). Quoted in Nathalie Clayer, *Aux origines du nationalisme albanais* (Paris: Karthala, 2007), 43.

¹⁰⁶ Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History* (London: MacMillan, 1994), 72; see also *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, vol. 8, ed. Miroslav Krleža (Zagreb: Jugoslovenski leksikografski zavod, 1971), 514–515.

¹⁰⁷ For the concept of “cultural division of labor,” see Michael Hechter, “Group Formation and the Cultural Division of Labour,” *American Journal of Sociology* 84 (1978), no. 2: 293–318.

¹⁰⁸ Vermeulen, “Greek Cultural Dominance,” 234.

¹⁰⁹ Jovan Cvijić, *Balkansko poluostrvo* (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike Socijalističke Republike Srbije, 1966), 529–530.

¹¹⁰ Roudometof, “From *Rum Millet*,” 13.

and cunning Greek traders and city-dwellers.¹¹¹ In 1897 Pandeli Kisimov wrote in his memoirs: "A citizen was, even if he did not know any Greek, a Greek; the name Greek indicated a city-dweller according to his lifestyle and his outfit; a Bulgarian could be the villager."¹¹² In summary, being a "Greek" was also a question of social distinction. However, the meaning of the term "Greek" was never disconnected from the notion of "Orthodox Christian," since only an Orthodox Christian in or originating from the Ottoman Empire could be a "Greek" in the sense of a city-dweller or trader. Muslim, Jewish, Armenian, and Catholic traders and city-dwellers were never called "Greeks." Orthodox Albanians, Bulgarians, Gagauz and Vlachs, on the other hand, could be "Greeks" without any difficulty.

Just as a "Greek" could be a trader or city-dweller, *Vlah* could refer to an ethnic Vlach but also to a person of any ethnic origin who practiced transhumance (semi-nomadic cattle breeding).¹¹³ However, only an Orthodox Christian Vlach was called a *Vlah*, his Muslim counterpart being a *yuruk* (from the Turkish *yörük*). Conversely, in Albanian *çoban* (shepherd) acquired (also) the meaning of "Vlach" (in the ethnic sense).¹¹⁴ Not only ethnic Albanians, but all armed men (soldiers, guardians, bodyguards) could be called *Arnauts* (Albanians).¹¹⁵ The Bulgarians, Serbs and Vlachs serving in the guard of the Wallachian prince in Bucharest on the eve of the Greek uprising in 1821 were called *Arnauts*.¹¹⁶ In Transylvania, as already mentioned, *români* meant Romanians, but also *paysans non libres*. In Ottoman Turkish, the word *türk* had the connotation of "simple peasant."¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ Paisiy, *Slavyanobălgarska istoriya*, 43–45.

¹¹² Quoted by Nadya Danova, *Ivan Dobrovski v perspektivata na bălgarskiya XIX vek* (Sofia: Valentin Trayanov, 2008), 56.

¹¹³ *Entsiklopediya Bălgariya*, vol. 1, ed. Vladimir Georgiev (Sofia: Bălgarska Akademiya na Naukite, 1978), 700; Vermeulen, "Greek Cultural Dominance," 237.

¹¹⁴ Victor Friedman, "The Vlach Minority in Macedonia: Language, Identity, Dialectology, and Standardization," in *Selected Papers in Slavic, Balkan, and Balkan Studies* [sic], eds. Juhani Nuoluo, Martti Leiwo and Jussi Halla-aho (Slavica Helsingiensia 21, Helsinki: University of Helsinki 2001), 26–50, accessed December 23, 2010, <http://mahimahi.uchicago.edu/media/faculty/vfriedm/163Friedman01.pdf>.

¹¹⁵ Clayer, *Aux origines*, 25.

¹¹⁶ Nikolay Todorov, "Novi dannii za dobrovoltsite ot grătskoto văstanie prez 1821 g. v Dunavskite knyazhestva," in *Sto i petdeset godini ot grătskoto văstanie 1821–1828*, eds. Nikolay Todorov and Veselin Traykov (Sofia: Bălgarska akademiya na naukite, 1973), 9, 17. An *Arnaut* in the sense of an "armed man" could be a Christian as well as a Muslim, but the members of the guard in Bucharest were of course all Orthodox Christians.

¹¹⁷ Roderic H. Davison, *Turkey: A Short History* (Huntingdon: Eothen Press, 1988), 3.

The double and even triple meanings sometimes carried by Balkan ethnonyms indicate that in the Balkans ethnic, religious, social and professional identities were blurred, overlapping and melding. To the participants in a conversation, based on the topic, it was obvious whether an ethnonym was used mainly in its ethnic, religious, social or vocational sense; however, the other meanings were always present as connotations. Moreover, one might use other, less ambiguous terms when addressing foreigners, Ottoman authorities, representatives of other social classes, and so on, taking into account the addressee's supposed (lack of) familiarity with these ethnonyms and their meanings in specific contexts. In any case, the polysemantic ethnonyms make clear once again that in the pre-national(ist) era ethnic affiliation as such was considered of limited importance. If ethnic affiliation had had the weight it eventually acquired during the nineteenth-century national revival period, people would have chosen an unambiguous terminology to denominate themselves and others.

It seems justified to conclude that the terms "Christian" and to a lesser extent "Romaeen" and "Greek" (the latter connoting city-dwellers or traders) functioned as proper, common names for the entire Orthodox Christian community in the Ottoman Empire. This does not at all mean that people were completely unaware of their ethnic identity. They also realized they spoke different languages. However, given the widespread bi- and polylingualism, the frequent occurrence of code-mixing, and "the easy permeability of the grammatical system of the language in contact situations," as Tsiv'yan puts it,¹¹⁸ this awareness—and especially its connection to ethnic identity—should probably be qualified. In regions with an ethnically mixed but (socially and professionally homogeneous) rural population, people seem to have identified themselves more frequently as ethnic Bulgarians, Serbs, Greeks and so on.¹¹⁹ In the Ottoman *defters*, Orthodox Christians are as a rule recorded as *kâfir* or *gâvur* (infidels) or (*u*)*rum*. Some *defters*, however, do mention the local occurrence of specific ethnic groups. A *ferman* from 1680 concerns taxes to be collected from "*rum ve arnavut ve sırf ve bulgar tayifesinin* (the Greek and the Albanian and the Serbian and the Bulgarian communities)."¹²⁰ Ivanova quotes

¹¹⁸ Tsiv'yan, *Model' mira*, 177.

¹¹⁹ Georgieva, "Soderzhanie i funktsii," 43–48; Makarova, *Bolgarskiy narod*, 44–45.

¹²⁰ Gălăb Gălăbov, "Narodnostno ni ime bălgari v starite osmanoturski dărzhavni dokumenti," *Rodina* 1 (1938–1939), no. 3: 92. Here the Turkish "*rum*" obviously refers to (ethnic) Greeks.

a *defter* referring to the *bulgar*, *srbf*, *eflák* (Vlach) and *rum* population of four "Albanian" towns in the region of Veliko Tărnovo, and other *defters* pertaining to the regions of Varna, Plovdiv, Ruse, and Sofia.¹²¹ However, given the nature and the purpose of the *defters*, there must have been a particular economic reason for the Ottomans to make these distinctions.

Although in epic folk songs, heroes are most often labeled "Christians" as well, ethnonyms seem to occur here most frequently and unequivocally in reference to ethnic affiliation, implying a certain consciousness of a common ancestry or of lost statehood, a vague mythical image of which seems to have been nourished by some ethnic groups.¹²² Paradoxically, as they were used mostly in oral literature, actual ethnonyms belong to the sphere of low culture, where ethno-cultural differences were in fact minimal and the consciousness of ethnic affiliation hardly involved strong feelings of solidarity and loyalty. An awareness of ethnic affiliation did undoubtedly exist, but obviously it only paralleled other, more morally compelling forms of familial, regional, professional or class group identification.¹²³

A "Culture in the Greek Language"

The Romaic community was characteristically a manifestation of religious commonality and a phenomenon of high culture. Developments in literature and the fine arts can be explained more adequately from the point of view of a supra-ethnic Romaic cultural community than in the narrow(er) context of a national culture.

The long process of cultural convergence reached its apogee in the second half of the eighteenth century, when a genuine supra-ethnic Romaic and remarkably homogeneous cultural commonwealth emerged, into which ethnic identities somehow "dissolved." Varieties of that Romaic culture had a regional, not a national, character. Machiel Kiel concludes his detailed investigation of post-Byzantine architecture and painting in Bulgaria by stating that

¹²¹ Ivanova, "Predi da se rodi," 150–151.

¹²² Dimităr Angelov, "Bălgari," 'bălgarska zemya,' 'bălgarsko ime,' 'bălgarska vyara' v pesenniya folklor XV–XIX v.—terminologichni prouchvaniya," *Palaeobulgarica* 4 (1980), no. 3: 5–30.

¹²³ Or, as Roudometof phrases it: "Membership of an *ethnie* [did] not necessarily lead to attributing political significance to ethnic differences." Roudometof, "From *Rum Millet*," 12.

[t]his art does have, in our opinion at least, a value of its own, but was part and parcel of the Byzantine *koine*, the Orthodox Balkan culture which inherited and perpetuated the forms and concepts of the great Empire of East Rome, all people with their own tastes and abilities. There were “schools,” yes, but these were inter-Balkan, by their members as well as by the origin of the ideas they transformed in painting. Master Michael of Thessaloniki meeting Master George of Bucharest in the middle of Bulgaria to paint a great church in Arbanassi (1760) symbolizes this inter-Balkan culture just as do the Greco-Macedono-Slavic “Last Macedonians” of the fifteenth century or the saintly Pimen of Sofia, trained in that great pan-Orthodox centre that was Mount Athos, where Serbian and Greek, Romanian, Russian and Bulgarian had and still has his own monastery or hermitage. The political borders of today did not exist and neither did the mythology and sensitivities of the modern nations.¹²⁴

The predominant use of Greek in most written expressions of Romaic culture did not make them “Greek” in the ethnic sense of the word. Guiseppe Dell’Agata emphasizes that in the late-eighteenth-century Balkans, “Greek culture” did not mean “its concrete ethnic character, which differentiates it from other Balkan peoples, but that set of ideological, scientific, political and cultural achievements in the largest sense, which in a certain historical period is transmitted through Greek language.” It is, Dell’Agata concludes, not “Greek culture,” but “a culture in the Greek language.”¹²⁵

The omnipresence of Greek was not only an obvious product of Romaic commonality but also an important unifying factor. In the Ottoman cities the language of the Orthodox divine services and of church administration was Greek, not only in the Greek dioceses, but also in the Bulgarian ones, regardless of whether they belonged to the Patriarchate of Constantinople or to the Autocephalous Archbishopric of Ohrid. Greek influence had been considerable in Ohrid from the very beginning, but by the end of the eighteenth century, the Archbishopric of Ohrid was “Graecized” in the same way and to the same extent as the Patriarchate of Constantinople.¹²⁶ Because the Serbian lands were so distant from Constantinople and the Greek ethnic zone, and because Serbia was overwhelmingly rural and

¹²⁴ Machiel Kiel, *Art and Society of Bulgaria in the Turkish Period* (Assen and Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1985), 348–349. The term “Last Macedonians,” introduced by Andreas Xynopoulos, refers to a number of painters in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries whose work is characterized by an innovative eclecticism and a Renaissance-like realism (Kiel, *Art and Society*, 340).

¹²⁵ Dzhuzepe Del’Agata (Giuseppe Dell’Agata), *Studii po bălgaristikata i slavistikata* (Sofia: Bălgarski mesechnik, 1999), 53–54.

¹²⁶ Kuzman Shapkarev, *Za vāzrazhdaneto na bălgarshinata v Makedoniya* (Sofia: Bălgarski pisatel, 1984), 37–40; Viktor Grigorovich, *Ocherk puteshestviya po Evropeyskoy Turtsii* (Moscow, 1877, 2nd ed.; facsimile edition: Sofia: BAN, 1978), 102.

had no sizable Greek commercial bourgeoisie, Greek influence was more moderate in the Patriarchate of Peć.¹²⁷ However, that influence should not be underestimated, even among the Serbs in the Habsburg Vojvodina.¹²⁸ There were Greek schools in Belgrade, Zemun and Novi Sad. In Belgrade, pupils first went to the Greek school (located in the garden of the cathedral) before going to a Serb school.¹²⁹ Until 1840 the urban elite spoke Greek.¹³⁰

Although the Patriarchate of Constantinople tolerated the practice of Church Slavonic (and other liturgical languages in Anatolia and the Near East), its persistent use of Greek as a liturgical language in church administration substantially contributed to the spread of the Greek language, especially in cities where a metropolitan or a bishop resided. In addition, in the eighteenth century Greek imposed itself as the *lingua franca* of the many Greek merchants, artisans and manufacturers who settled in cities all over the Balkan peninsula and formed the core of a multiethnic upper class. Non-Greeks who wanted to engage in these professions had to know Greek. In urban centers, Greek was almost the only language in which Orthodox youngsters, whether future priests or businessmen, were educated. Before the last quarter of the nineteenth century, there were no (Orthodox Christian) schools with Albanian or Vlach as the language of instruction. In the first half of the nineteenth century, even in Bulgarian schools where Bulgarian was the language of instruction, a command of Greek remained one of the major objectives of education. However, neither the Patriarchate of Constantinople nor the Graecophone bourgeoisie (which was by no means exclusively ethnically Greek) had the intention of ethnically assimilating the non-Greek population. The spread of Greek was instead a side effect—probably welcomed, but unintended—of their activities. Gandev points out that “until the 1820s, the steady infiltration of the Greek language did not encounter, at least in the cities, any resistance.”¹³¹

¹²⁷ Radosavljević, *Pravoslavna crkva*, 67.

¹²⁸ The Serbs in the Habsburg Empire, like the Greeks in the Venetian possessions and the Romanians in Transylvania, lived in different political circumstances and were exposed to other cultural influences than the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire, though. To what extent they participated in the the formation of the Romaic community and—even more interestingly—which new Enlightenment ideas they probably introduced into the Romaic community awaits further investigation.

¹²⁹ Đorđević, *Grčka i srpska prosveta*, 92.

¹³⁰ Stoianovich, *Balkan Worlds*, 294.

¹³¹ Gandev, *Problemi*, 79.

By the end of the eighteenth century, as a result of these developments, Greek had become the common language of worship and church administration and the *lingua franca* of commerce and industry, but it also served as the language of intellectual communication used by a Romaic intellectual elite, consisting of authors of various ethnic backgrounds who wrote in Greek for an equally ethnically diversified Romaic audience. The perception and acceptance of Greek as the language of the entire Romaic community had been induced by the religious symbolic value it had, comparable to that of Arabic in relation to Islam and Latin to Catholicism. In addition, as with Arabic and Latin, the Greek language appears to have been somehow disconnected from the ethnic community it primarily belonged to. It was used as a sacred language by a church that claimed to be ecumenical. Intellectuals used an archaizing written or "learned" variant of Greek that was almost incomprehensible to an uneducated Greek native speaker. In its spoken, "demotic" variant, the Greek *koine* was used as an equally "international" means of communication by traders, artisans and manufacturers of various ethnic origins. Greek in all its variants had largely lost its "ethnic" nature and had become a "supra-ethnic" or ethnically "unmarked" or "international" language. Only the Greek dialects in which the Greek folk songs were sung were closely linked to the Greek *ethnos*, but this kind of Greek was held in contempt by "civilized" Greeks and was not recommended to non-Greeks.

Just as Arabic and Latin scripts were associated with Islam and Catholicism, respectively, so Greek script was linked with Orthodox Christianity. The history of the Albanian alphabet, which was characterized by competition among the Arabic, Greek and Latin alphabets, clearly indicates the religious symbolic value these alphabets had in the multi-confessional Albanian community.¹³² The Orthodox Vlachs used the Greek script until the end of the nineteenth century, when it was gradually ousted by its Latin competitor due to Romanian cultural and political influence. Among the Bulgarians, especially in Macedonia, the Cyrillic script had largely fallen into disuse or was known as "Serbian script."¹³³ There also

¹³² See Stavro Skendi, *The History of the Albanian Alphabet: A Case of Complex Cultural and Political Development* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1960); Robert Elsie, "Albanian Literature in Greek Script: The Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth-Century Orthodox Tradition in Albanian Writing," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 15 (1991): 20–34.

¹³³ See, for instance, Grigor Pärlichev, *Izbrani proizvedeniya* (Sofia: Bălgarski pisatel, 1980), 371.

exists a small tradition of Bulgarian texts written in Greek script.¹³⁴ The Orthodox Karamans in Anatolia and Gagauz in Bulgaria, Romania and Moldova wrote Turkish with Greek characters. After they renounced the Greek language in their churches, the Bulgarian inhabitants of Sliven, who were more familiar with Turkish than with Church Slavonic, resorted to the liturgical books of the Karamans and the Gagauz, the Greek alphabet obviously sufficing to give these books a “Christian” character.¹³⁵ To be sure, Cyrillic script too possessed this sacred character, not only to the Slavs who still used it, but also to the Romanians who, after the introduction of Romanian as a liturgic language in the seventeenth century, continued for about 150 years to read, write and print in Cyrillic.

Evidently, the importance of the Church Slavonic tradition should not be minimized. We can see that ethnic communities in the Balkans that did not have a similar tradition—like the Vlachs and the Albanians—only belatedly created a written literature in their own native languages. Nevertheless, the use of Church Slavonic appears to have been reduced mainly to its liturgical or—somewhat broader—religious functions. The number of surviving original works in Church Slavonic dating from the Ottoman pre-national era and written by a Bulgarian is negligible. There was no “living” literature in Church Slavonic comparable in size (number of texts), quality and distribution to that in learned Greek. Parteniy Pavlovich was one of the very few Bulgarian literary figures in the late eighteenth century who used Church Slavonic in their personal correspondence.¹³⁶

However, while the use of languages other than Greek does not challenge the idea of a common Romaic literary culture, neither does the limited number of literary works in Bulgarian (whether in Church Slavonic or the Bulgarian vernacular) mean that Bulgarians before the nineteenth century had no literary culture. Again, the situation should be interpreted from the angle of the Romaic community, following Vasilka Tăpkova-Zaimova and Pavlina Boycheva’s observation that the distinction between “one’s own literature” and “a foreign literature” was no longer valid in the Balkans after the fifteenth century, “when the idea of a common Orthodox unity of all Christians had materialized.”¹³⁷

¹³⁴ See Manyo Stoyanov, “Grătskata i latinskata azbuka v bălgarskata pismenost,” in Manyo Stoyanov, *Bukvi i knigi* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1976), 243–263.

¹³⁵ Danova, *Ivan Dobrovski*, 2008, 87–90.

¹³⁶ Bonyo Angelov, *Săvremenitsi na Paisiy* (Sofia: BAN 1964), 19.

¹³⁷ Vasilka Tăpkova-Zaimova and Pavlina Boycheva, “Sv. Varvara vāv vizantiyskata i srednobălgarskata traditsiya,” in Petkov, *Bălgarskata tsărkva*, 153.

An interesting illustration is offered by the *damaskins*. These pieces of religious literature are named after Damascenus of Stoudion (?–1577), who in 1561 in Venice published the collection *Thisavros* (Thesaurus), written in a spoken Greek *koine* on behalf of the common people who did not understand “learned” Greek. They were soon translated, initially into Church Slavonic and eventually into spoken Bulgarian or an idiom close to it, and called *damaskins*. Eventually, new, original *damaskins* were written by Bulgarian authors in the Bulgarian vernacular. Rather than considering the *damaskins* as literary works transmitted from one national literature into another, it seems more appropriate to think of them as literary works, written in different languages, but belonging to one single Romaic literary “system.” In this system, “learned” Greek was the common language of the educated Orthodox Christians of whatever ethnic origin, while the vernacular was resorted to on behalf of the uneducated. That vernacular could be Greek, Bulgarian, Romanian, Serbian or (Karaman) Turkish. All these languages were likewise complementary to learned Greek.¹³⁸

The Bulgarian *damaskin* writers, when including in their works Greek texts that had been translated earlier, in the Middle Ages, into Church Slavonic, did not make use of these old translations, but as a rule preferred to translate them once again from the Greek text they had at their disposal.¹³⁹ Elka Mircheva was able to discover only a few Old Slavonic translations included in *damaskins*.¹⁴⁰ Whatever the reason might have been—most likely it was easier for the *damaskin* writers to translate straight from the book at hand than to search for the Church Slavonic translation in the monastery library—it shows that while the “Romaic” link between the Greek and the Bulgarian *damaskins* was very close, there seems to have been little continuity between Church Slavonic literature and the *damaskins*. Thus the *damaskins* have a logical, “fitting” place in

¹³⁸ Dimitrije Bogdanović calls the Serbian *damaskins* “another literary manifestation of the cultural community of the Balkan peoples.” (Dimitrije Bogdanović, *Istorija stare srpske književnosti* [Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1980], 264.) For the Romanian *damaskins*, see Pandeale Olteanu, “Curentul damaschin în cultura română,” *Cel de-al VII-lea Congres internațional al slaviștilor, Varșovia, septembrie 1973*. I had access only to the abstract of this contribution, “Prúd ‘Damaskinov’ v slovensko-rumunskej littérature [sic],” in *VII międzynarodowy kongres slawistów. Warszawa, 21–27 VIII 1973. Streszczenia referatów i komunikatów* (Warsaw: Państwowe wydawnictwo naukowe, 1973), 104–106. Some Romanian *damaskins* were translated from Church Slavonic and not from Greek.

¹³⁹ Donka Petkanova-Toteva, *Iz grătsko-bălgarskite knižhovni otnosheniya prez XVII-XVIII vek* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1969), 147.

¹⁴⁰ Elka Mircheva, *Nedamaskinovi slova v novobălgarskite damaskini ot XVII vek* (Veliko Tărnovo: Faber, 2001).

a polylingual Romaic literary system. Explaining them exclusively within the framework of a Bulgarian “national” literature actually boils down to attributing a written literature (in the vernacular) to the under-educated while denying to the educated a literary language corresponding to their intellectual needs—unless it is assumed (without any reason, as we shall see further) that the ranks of the educated in Bulgaria were limited to the monks and priests able to read Church Slavonic.¹⁴¹

Apparently, prior to the second half of the nineteenth century, when the Patriarchate indeed started pursuing to some extent a Greek nationalist policy, there was no major objection to the use of Vlach (Aromanian) and Albanian in church services, although the church authorities certainly did not encourage it. Ascribing the scarcity of Romaic literature in Albanian and Vlach solely to the opposition of the Patriarchate is not convincing. A sizable Orthodox Christian devotional literature existed in Arabic, Georgian, Romanian, Slavonic, Turkish and many other languages. More likely, the Albanian and Vlach Orthodox Christians were not particularly interested in having divine services in their vernaculars. In Bulgaria too, as we saw, prior to the 1840s, the urban population did not insist very resolutely on having services in Church Slavonic. If a sufficient number of Aromanians and Albanians had demanded divine services in their respective languages, the Patriarchate would certainly have conceded. It had no reason to refuse them, since it allowed services in Church Slavonic, Romanian, Turkish and other languages. This does not mean that Aromanians and Albanians had no intellectual or spiritual life at all before they celebrated the liturgy and had a literature in their own languages. Instead, it indicates that before the emergence of nationalism, they considered Greek, the language of the Romaic community, to be “their” language, satisfying most, if not all, of their intellectual and spiritual needs.

¹⁴¹ Peter Gerlingshoff proposed as a research goal “to model on the basis of its historical and sociological developmental components a type of Balkan literature that should include, in addition to the universal characteristics, those particular [characteristics] that are specific of the [cultural] space of the literatures concerned. Secondly, their individual, national characteristics can be derived as singular variants of this type.” (Peter Gerlingshoff, “Die Stellung der Literaturwissenschaft in der Balkanologie,” *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie* 8 [1971–1972], 1–2, 28.) One might be tempted to describe the various eighteenth-century Balkan literatures as variants of a “Romaic type.” However, a concept as “a national variant of a Balkan type of literature” makes sense only from the nineteenth century onwards. Only then do literary works have stylistic particularities, subject matter, “messages,” social contexts (literary life and readership), and so on that can justifiably be called “national.” It would be nonsense to attribute a “national character” to the *damaskins*.

A good illustration of this reading is offered by the cultural activities developed in the eighteenth century in Moschopolis (now Voskopojë in Albania). Although there were also Albanians and Greeks in Moschopolis, the city was overwhelmingly Aromanian.¹⁴² By 1730 the Moschopolitans established a printing press of their own, which produced religious literature and schoolbooks in Greek.¹⁴³ The high school, which existed as early as 1700, was transformed into the New Academy in 1744 and became one of the leading centers of learning for all Orthodox Christians in the Western Balkans. The language of education was Greek; famous Greek teachers were invited to teach in Greek.¹⁴⁴ Among the books published by Moschopolitans was the famous Greek-Vlach-Albanian dictionary, included in the *Protopeiria* (Rudiments, 1770) by Theodoros Kavalliotis (1718–1789), director of the New Academy. An Albanian or a Vlach himself, he wanted his co-nationals to acquire a better command of Greek. With the same aim, his pupil and successor as a director of the New Academy, the Vlach Daniil of Moschopolis (1754–1825), compiled his *Eisagogiki didaskalia* (Introductory teaching, 1793/1794?, 2nd ed., 1802), containing a dictionary of Greek, Bulgarian, Vlach and Albanian.¹⁴⁵ Who would or could have prevented Kavalliotis or Daniil from printing books in Albanian or Vlach, if they had wanted to do so and if there had been a substantial demand for such books?

Prior to the late nineteenth century, texts in Aromanian were extremely rare. Apart from the inscription in Greek and Aromanian (in Greek script) on the goblet of Simota, dating from the first half of the eighteenth century, attestations of Aromanian belong to the religious sphere. There is the inscription in Greek, Albanian and Aromanian (in Greek script) on an icon of the Holy Virgin, made in 1731 by the Aromanian monk Nektarios Terpos from Moschopolis and discovered in Ardenica near Fier in Albania, and an inscription in learned and demotic Greek and Aromanian

¹⁴² There was probably no Slav population in Moschopolis. Thede Kahl, "Wurde in Moschopolis auch Bulgarisch gesprochen? Überlegungen zur Slavophonie im Südalbanien des 18. Jahrhunderts," *Probleme de filologie slavă* 4 (1996): 484–494.

¹⁴³ See Max Demeter Peyfuss, *Die Druckerei von Moschopolis, 1731–1769. Buchdruck und Heiligenverehrung im Erzbistum Achrída* (Vienna and Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1989), 82–83.

¹⁴⁴ George Chassiotis, *L'instruction publique chez les Grecs: depuis la prise de Constantinople par les Turcs jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1881), 53–54.

¹⁴⁵ See Angeliki Konstantakopoulou, *I elliniki glossa sta Valkania* (Ioannina: Panepistimio Ioanninon, 1988); Jürgen Kristophson, "Das Lexikon Tetraglosson des Daniil Moschopolitis," *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie* 10 (1970), 1–128. For the lost first edition of the lexicon, see Kristophson, "Das Lexicon," 8–10.

(in Greek script) in the church of the monastery of the Holy Apostles near Clinovo (now Klinovos) in Thessaly. A more substantial text is the *Aromanian Liturgy*, an Aromanian manuscript (in Greek script) produced in the mid-eighteenth century in Moschopolis, halfway between a book of edifying reading and a translation of liturgical texts. The *Codex of Dimonie*, dating from the beginning of the nineteenth century and found in Ohrid, contains a number of translations of edifying texts by various Greek authors, including Dimitrios Darvaris, Polyzois Kontos and Damaskinos Stouditis.¹⁴⁶

In Albanian, apart from fifteen lines translated from the Gospel of St. Matthew, dating from the fifteenth or the beginning of the sixteenth century, found in a Greek manuscript in Milan, and the aforementioned icon of the Holy Virgin by Nektarios Terpos with the trilingual inscription, there is the *Anonimi i Elbasanit* (the “anonymous manuscript of Elbasan,” ca. 1750), written in (an adapted) Greek script probably by Grigorios of Moschopolis, future bishop of Durrës and author of several hagiographies in Greek. The manuscript contains translations of parts of the four Gospels, apparently meant for Albanians, omitting (New Testament) Greek. Todhri (Theodoros) Haxhifilipi (1730–1805) is reported to have translated the Old and New Testament into Albanian, using another adapted Greek alphabet, but his translation was lost. To Kostandin Berati (ca. 1745–1825) is ascribed a collection of various texts (biblical and liturgical texts, a religious poem, a Greek-Albanian glossary, a chronicle and several religious notes). A part of this codex was copied and included in a manuscript produced by Kostandin Cepi. The vast majority of Kostandin Cepi’s handwritten collection of religious texts, however, is in Greek.¹⁴⁷

In Turkish, an impressive corpus of religious texts was produced by the Karamans—Orthodox Christians in Anatolia, speaking Turkish.¹⁴⁸ As the common people had little or no knowledge of Greek, educated Karamans translated liturgical and edifying texts into Turkish, making use of Greek

¹⁴⁶ See Thede Kahl, “Limba și intenționalitatea primelor texte scrise în aromână (1731–1813),” in Kahl, *Istoria*, 24–42; Achille G. Lazarou, *L’aroumain et ses rapports avec le grec* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1986), 126–141.

¹⁴⁷ Robert Elsie, *History of Albanian Literature*, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 122–130.

¹⁴⁸ János Eckmann, “Die Karamanische Literatur,” *Philologiae Turcae Fundamenta* (1964), vol. 2, 819–835. For the Karamans, see Richard Clogg, “Anadolu Hristiyan Karındağlarımız: The Turkish-Speaking Greeks of Asia Minor,” in Richard Clogg, *Anatolica: Studies in the Greek East in the 18th and 19th Centuries*, chapter 3 (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate/Variation, 1996), 65–91.

characters. The first texts in Karaman Turkish were written in the sixteenth century; in the eighteenth century, several hundred Karaman books were printed in the major cities in Europe and in the Ottoman Empire. However numerous, these publications do not constitute a literature in its own right, but represent—just like the eighteenth-century writings in Aromanian, vernacular Bulgarian and Albanian—one of the components of the “Romaic literary system.” As Eckmann points out, “Karaman literature is not an independent literature. It consists mainly of translations and compilations from Greek works. The content is overwhelmingly religious and moral.”¹⁴⁹ Eventually, original and secular works as well were written in Karaman Turkish, which made the later development of Karaman literature quite comparable to the development of the various Balkan literatures. As a Karaman nation did not come into being—the Karamans were expelled from Turkey in 1923 and treated as Greeks in their new homeland, Greece—Karaman literature was never construed as a “Karaman national literature.” As a result, its belonging to the Romaic literary system is more evident than in the case of, for instance, Bulgarian Romaic literature, which is integrated “beyond recognition” into the narrative of a Bulgarian national literature.

The few texts in Albanian and Vlach that have come down to us—even assuming that many other texts have been lost—give us only a vague and incomplete idea of the intellectual and spiritual life of the Albanian and Vlach Orthodox Christians, as do the many texts in Bulgarian and Karaman Turkish regarding the Bulgarians and the Karamans.¹⁵⁰ However, whether scarce or abundant, these texts fit in perfectly with what I labeled a “Romaic literary system,” consisting of (learned) Greek as the chief means of communication of the intellectual elite, and demotic Greek, “spoken” Bulgarian (the language of the *damaskins*), Aromanian, Albanian and Karaman Turkish as “auxiliary” languages, providing access to the basics of the Christian faith to those who did not understand learned Greek.

In fact, Albanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Romanians, Vlachs, Serbs and Karamans alike participated in the cultural life of the Romaic community as scholars and literary figures writing Greek. Giorgis Exarchos’s book on the Vlachs contains a list of more than forty names of scholars and writers of Vlach origin who lived and worked between the seventeenth

¹⁴⁹ Eckmann, “Die Karamanische Literatur,” 822.

¹⁵⁰ The Gagauz were less productive as writers; however, as they made use of the texts in Karaman Turkish, they also participated in the “Romaic literary system” as readers.

and the first half of the nineteenth century.¹⁵¹ In the nineteenth century, about thirty Bulgarian public figures are known to have written in Greek, and some of them—like Nikola Piccolo and Grigor Pärlichev (Grigorios Stavridis)—acquired great fame as Greek literary figures.¹⁵² However, recording the cultural life within the Romaic community, one should also take into account the many architects, painters, woodcarvers, musicians and others of various ethnic origins, and the Graecophone—not necessarily Greek—members of the urban elites all over the Balkans who participated in Romaic cultural life as readers and in general as consumers of Romaic cultural goods. What emerges then is a multiethnic community with a well-defined religious identity and a rich, diversified and self-sufficient cultural life. All cultural goods were the shared property of the entire *religious* community; explaining them from the point of view of one particular *ethnic* community can only result in an anachronistic distortion of historical reality.

* * *

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Romaic community reached its peak of homogeneity and coherence. While cultural developments previously took place more or less spontaneously and without planning, they now had a more organized character, according to the increasingly complex structure and the more comprehensive economic, social and cultural activities of the Romaic upper class. In Istanbul and the capitals of the Romanian principalities Bucharest and Iași, a genuine Orthodox Christian aristocracy had emerged, known as the Phanariotes. Like every aristocracy, it was at once admired and detested. But it also exerted a considerable cultural influence, which actually reinforced the Romaic identity and accelerated the processes of cultural convergence among the various ethnic groups within the Orthodox Christian community. The Phanariote *hospodars* in the Romanian principalities financed and supervised prestigious academies that provided modern higher education in Greek to Orthodox youth of all ethnic origins from all over the empire. In the major cities of the empire, a multiethnic commercial petty

¹⁵¹ Exarchos, *Autoi einai oi Vlachoï*, 51–53.

¹⁵² Nadka Nikolova, *Bilingvizmăt v bălgarskite zemi prez XV-XIX vek* (Shumen: Episkop Konstantin Preslavski, 2006), 109; Manyo Stoyanov, *Bălgarska vāzrozhdenska knizhnina*, vol. 1 (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1957), 455–475. It is true that not all of these Bulgarian writers can be regarded as “Romaic” writers; some of them used the Greek language to defend Bulgarian nationalist stances. However, they were all products of the Romaean community.

bourgeoisie developed whose core was Greek. All members of this urban elite spoke Greek, not only because Greek was the basic language of their religious cultural community, but also because Greek had become the *lingua franca* of commerce in the Balkans, and because Greek was considered a socially and culturally prestigious language. It underscored the distinction between the bourgeoisie and the peasants—the social class most members of the new bourgeoisie originated from but did not want to be associated with. In addition, like the bourgeoisie all over Europe, the Romaic bourgeoisie copied the local aristocracy somewhat, including using the Greek language. In 1837 Rayno Popovich wrote in his *Hristo-itiya* (Manual of Good Behavior) that “all our noblemen (*blagorodni*) in the whole of Bulgaria [...] speak and every day read and write Greek and cannot manage without it. Therefore Greek should be introduced in Bulgaria even more, because it is very necessary.”¹⁵³ By “noblemen” Popovich obviously meant a social category and not people possessing outstanding moral qualities. On the model of the academies in Bucharest and Iași, more “academies” were opened in Moschopolis, Ioannina, Patmos, Constantinople and Metsovo, as well as on Athos, where an even larger number of Greeks and non-Greeks were educated.¹⁵⁴ Thus in Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Moldova and Wallachia, and to a lesser extent in Serbia, Greek schools contributed to Graecizing the Orthodox Christian urban establishment.

Pupils in these new schools were educated in the spirit of the Western Enlightenment, which, thanks to the intellectual networks within the Romaic community, rapidly spread among the Graecized city-dwellers in the Ottoman Empire. It was a rather diluted version of the Enlightenment, the most popular aspect of which actually was European “lifestyle” (*alafanga*—“the French way”). It entered the Ottoman Empire mainly through Greek books and articles in journals or through Greek translations of mainly French literature. In the years 1775–1800, about half of the literary production in Greek was of a secular nature.¹⁵⁵ The early Balkan Enlightenment focused on cultural emancipation, education, pragmatism and rationalism, and again, as Angeliki Konstantakopoulou elaborately demonstrated, the Greek language was considered the ideal vehicle for

¹⁵³ Quoted in Nikolova, *Bilingvizmät*, 101–102. Popovich added that Slavic should be preferred as a mother, but Greek should be “inevitable and honored as a wet nurse.”

¹⁵⁴ Chassiotis, *L'instruction publique*, 35–82.

¹⁵⁵ Roudometov, “From *Rum Millet*,” 21.

the new ideas and practices.¹⁵⁶ Those who contributed to the spread of the Greek language had no intention of turning all speakers of Greek into ethnic Greeks. In fact, living in a period of transition, they continued to display a supra-ethnic Orthodox Christian psychological makeup in combination with an enlightened, entrepreneurial approach of life. In the introduction (in verse) to his *Greek-Slavic-Vlach-Albanian Dictionary*, the Vlach (!) Daniil of Moschopolis advocates mastering Greek mainly for commercial and intellectual reasons:

Peoples that before spoke alien tongues, but devout in holy matters,
Acquire the tongue and speech of the Greeks.
Greatly benefited in your professions,
And in all your commercial undertakings.
Rejoice, young Bulgarians, Albanians and Wallachians,
Deacons, priests and monks.
Wake up from the deep sleep of ignorance,
Learn the Greek language, the mother of wisdom.¹⁵⁷

Daniil addresses an audience of Orthodox Christians (“devout in holy matters,” even “deacons, priests and monks”), while perceiving Greek as the language of the Enlightenment (“Wake from the deep sleep of ignorance,/ Learn the Greek language, the mother of wisdom”). Greek was regarded as the language of the Enlightenment by more than just the Greeks. The entire multiethnic Balkan commercial bourgeoisie and a considerable part of the clergy assuaged their thirst for modern knowledge by reading Greek books.¹⁵⁸ Significantly, from 1750 to 1840, 1,115 different titles (not copies!) of printed Greek books circulated in the Bulgarian lands, compared with only fifty-two titles of printed Bulgarian books.¹⁵⁹ Obviously it

¹⁵⁶ Konstantakopoulou, *I elliniki glossa*.

¹⁵⁷ English translation in Richard Clogg, ed., *The Movement for Greek Independence, 1770–1821: A Collection of Documents* (London: MacMillan, 1976), 91–92.

¹⁵⁸ See Larry Wolff, *The Enlightenment and the Orthodox World* (Athens: Institute for Neohellenic Research, 2001), for the interest of the Orthodox clergy in the Western Enlightenment.

¹⁵⁹ Stoyanov, *Bălgarska vāzrozhdenska knizhnina*, 471–472; Manyo Stoyanov, *Stari grātski knigi v Bălgariya* (Sofia: Narodna biblioteka “Kiril i Metodiy,” 1978), 47–168. These figures are based on the collections in the HH. Cyril and Methodius National Library in Sofia. However, we may assume that Bulgarian librarians have collected Bulgarian books more scrupulously than Greek books. That is what Stoyanov himself warns the reader about concerning the collections of Bulgarian and Greek manuscripts in Bulgarian libraries. (Manyo Stoyanov, *Opis na grātskite i drugi chuzhdoezichni rākopisi v Narodna Biblioteka “Kiril i Metodiy”* [Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1973], 13.) See also the additions to Stoyanov’s survey in Nikos Merdzimekis and Dimitris Stamatopoulos, “Prinos kām opisa na grātskite knigi v Bălgariya ot Manyo Stoyanov,” in Danova, *Istoriyata i knigite*, 471–504.

was not just the Greeks in Bulgarian cities reading these books: They can be found in private libraries of educated Bulgarians, in public libraries and school libraries serving a Bulgarian readership, and in Bulgarian monasteries.¹⁶⁰ Again, the use of Greek as the “universal” language of reason and progress (like French in Western Europe) had no ethnic implications. The Greek—actually the Romaic Graecophone—intellectual elite did not promote *Greek* culture, but *European* lifestyle, education and philosophy (in that order), in Greek.

The early national liberation movements also bear witness to the curious combination of a persistent Romaic legacy and the new political concepts of civil rights and citizenship. It has been suggested that behind the educational innovations introduced by the Phanariotes and others, there was a pan-Hellenistic scheme to Graecize the non-Greek Balkan population with the aim of creating a Greek state encompassing all former Byzantine territories. However, the existence of such plans prior to the 1840s is hard to prove. The early Greek “national projects” are very much in the spirit of Orthodox solidarity, tuned to the concept of “citizenship” as promoted by the eighteenth-century French philosophers.¹⁶¹ Their political vision was in fact, as Daniel Payne comments on the ideological stand of Rigas, “a transmutation of Orthodox political culture into a secular vision.”¹⁶²

Rigas Feraios Velesinlis's *Principles of Legislation and Administration* (1797) provides the most eloquent illustration of the position that members of other ethnic groups—such as Albanians, Bulgarians, Serbs and Vlachs—should be considered “citizens” of a future Greek state with the same rights and duties as the Greeks. Thus Article 7 proclaims: “The sovereign people consists of the entirety of the inhabitants of this state, without religious or linguistic distinction: Greeks, Albanians, Vlachs, Turks and any other race.”¹⁶³ According to Rigas, Greek should be the common language in the future Greek state. Article 22 of his *The Rights of Man* says: “Every individual, without exception, must be able to read and to write. The nation should found schools in all villages for boys and girls. (...) [T]he teaching of the Greek language is indispensable.”¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ Nadia Danova, “La modernisation de la société bulgare aux XVIII^e–XIX^e siècles : la communication et le rôle de la langue grecque,” *Bulletin de l'Association Internationale d'Etudes du Sud-Est Européen* 32–34 (2002–2004): 200–201.

¹⁶¹ Danova, *Natsionalniyat vǎpros*, 33–34, 45.

¹⁶² Daniel Payne, *The Revival of Political Hesychasm in Contemporary Orthodox Thought* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), 56.

¹⁶³ Apostolos Daskalakis, *Les œuvres des Rhigas Velesinlis* (Paris, 1937), 95.

¹⁶⁴ Daskalakis, *Les œuvres*, 87.

However, it is not likely that Greek is promoted here with a view to ethnic assimilation. Rigas prefers Greek not because it is the language of the (ethnic) Greeks, but for purely pragmatic reasons: "All laws and decrees should be written in the common language of the Greeks, because it is the easiest [language] to learn for all the peoples that constitute the state."¹⁶⁵ The French philosophers from whom Rigas borrowed his ideas believed that the civilization they advocated was based on universal values; they were not interested in ethnic particularities, as they considered them to be related to the backward and "unenlightened" low culture. The Balkan bourgeoisie, adherents of the same European civilization—rightly or "wrongly understood"¹⁶⁶—not discriminating between Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek or Vlach peasants and shepherds, felt the same disdain for popular culture marked by conservatism and religious obscurantism. What made the Greeks more valuable in their eyes was not Greek ethnic culture, but ancient Greek culture, and this admiration—after centuries of disinterest and disapproval—was in fact also borrowed from the Western Enlightenment. In any case, accepting the presence of different ethnic groups within their dreamed-of state, the leaders of the Greek national movement—many of whom, by the way, were Albanians or Vlachs—also approved of these groups speaking their own languages. Greek was imposed for practical reasons, to enable the citizens to communicate with each other and ideally to participate in democratic decision-making. But probably most important of all was the fact that the members of the Romaic bourgeoisie, the social class the proponents of early liberalism addressed and represented, as a rule knew Greek, so that their proposal actually dovetailed with the existing situation. Peter Mackridge points out that Rigas "was perhaps not so much expressing an ideology of Greek imperialism as responding to what he took to be the consciousness of the Sultan's subjects."¹⁶⁷

Thus the position of the Greek language in pre-national(ist) Balkan society was somewhat comparable to that of French in France during the *Ancien Régime*. French society consisted of manifold regional (ethnic) cultures with their own languages and *patois* in the countryside and an

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. (Article 53 of *Principles of legislation and administration*.)

¹⁶⁶ See Dobri Voynikov's play *Krivorazbranata tsivilizatsiya* (Civilization wrongly understood, 1871), ridiculing European "moral values."

¹⁶⁷ Peter Mackridge, "The Greek Intelligentsia 1780–1830: A Balkan Perspective," in *Balkan Society in the Age of Greek Independence*, ed. Richard Clogg (London: MacMillan, 1981), 69.

urban elite speaking another, politically and culturally more prestigious language—literary French. Eugen Weber points out that on the eve of the French Revolution, the majority of France's population did not speak any French; to the French Crown, French was relevant “merely as an instrument of rule,” known to “burghers of the bigger towns” and, due to its growing social prestige, “winning converts among the middle and upper classes.” After the Revolution, French was imposed on all citizens of France in order to equip them to participate in the dealings of democracy.¹⁶⁸ This might have happened to the Greek language in the Balkans if—for better or for worse—the liberation movement(s) had preserved their Romaic and civil character and had not turned into ethnic nationalist movements.

The Greek uprising in 1821 started as an uprising of Orthodox Christians against Ottoman rule, inspired by both feelings of Orthodox Christian solidarity and (rather vague) ideas about freedom and civil rights.¹⁶⁹ The engineers of the uprising, the leaders of the *Philiki Hetaireia* (Friendly Society), constituted a multiethnic revolutionary organization, consisting of Greeks, Romanians and Serbs, who wanted to create a multiethnic Orthodox state. Significantly, the 16,000 Catholic Greeks on the islands of Naxos, Tinos, Syros and Thira refused to participate.¹⁷⁰ The Greek Giorgakis Olympios, born in the Vlach village of Livadi or Vlacholivado and most probably a Vlach, succeeded in involving in the conspiracy a number of participants in the Serbian uprising of a few years earlier (including several Bulgarians). Serving as “apostle” to Bulgaria was another Greek, Dimitrios Vatikiotis, who had led a Bulgarian volunteer squad during the 1806–1812 Russo-Ottoman War. The Bulgarian Dimităr Mustakov played a prominent role as a mediator between the *Philiki Hetaireia* and the Serbian prince Miloš Obrenović. According to the preparatory scheme, 20,000 Greeks and Bulgarians in the region of Plovdiv and the same number in the region of Kotel and Gabrovo would take up arms. Members of the *Philiki Hetaireia* collected money and hid weapons and munitions in Bulgarian cities like Tărnovo, Varna and Elena.¹⁷¹

Among the 1,002 insurgents who fled to Russia after the uprising was crushed in Wallachia and Moldavia, there were 503 Greeks, 208 Romanians, 132 Bulgarians, eighty Serbs, sixteen Russians, fifteen Ukrainians,

¹⁶⁸ Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1977), 70–72.

¹⁶⁹ Roudometof, “From *Rum Millet*,” 30–31.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁷¹ Danova and Christakoudis, *Istoriya na nova Gărtsiya*, 107–112.

seven Albanians, six Roma, three Gagauz and others.¹⁷² The information the Russian authorities gathered from the refugees shows that the latter were aware of their ethnic origins. One wonders, however, whether this awareness can also be considered an indication of “a clear feeling and consciousness of national belonging,” as Todorov holds.¹⁷³ A study by Manyo Stoyanov, containing a number of quotations from contemporaneous Bulgarian manuscripts, shows another picture.¹⁷⁴ Although their authors from time to time do mention “Greeks” and “Turks”—apparently, though not unequivocally—as ethnic groups, they almost always make use of the terms “Christians” and “Hagarenes.” A few times “Bulgaria” and “a Bulgarian city” are referred to; only once is the presence of “Bulgarians” brought up, and only once is a metropolitan bishop called “Bulgarian.”¹⁷⁵ Obviously, to these eyewitnesses the insurgents’ belonging to the Romaic community was far more important than their ethnic affiliation.

The Greeks in the independent Kingdom of Greece increasingly opted for an ethnic definition of the nation, stressing the genetic continuity that linked the ancient to the modern Greeks. Nevertheless, for a long time their political programs continued to be based on a civil or at least non-ethnic understanding of nationhood. On the one hand, they considered everyone who was an Orthodox Christian and claimed some mastery of Greek to be a Greek. On the other hand, they thought of Greeks as the descendents of the ancient Greeks. These two approaches were incompatible. The 1822 Constitution of Epidavros still sticks to the religious principle, defining Greeks as

all the autochthonous inhabitants of the Greek state who believe in Christ. (...) All those who came from outside and live or establish themselves in the Greek state are equal with the autochthonous Greeks before the law. Before long the government will be sure to pass a law in order to naturalize foreigners who desire to become Greeks.¹⁷⁶

Although other ethnic groups are no longer mentioned by name (as Rigas still did), Greekness is obviously defined by religion and citizenship. As a matter of fact, the problem the Greeks faced was not so much ethnic diversity but the massive number of immigrants (of whatever ethnic

¹⁷² Todorov, “Novi danni,” 9–14.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 9.

¹⁷⁴ Manyo Stoyanov, “Grätskoto västanie ot 1821 g. v bălgarskite răkopisi,” in Todorov and Traykov, *Sto i petdeset godini*, 89–101.

¹⁷⁵ Stoyanov, “Grätskoto västanie,” 95.

¹⁷⁶ Danova, *Natsionalniyat väpros*, 52–53.

background, including Greek) claiming Greek citizenship. The 1827 Constitution of Troezen states that all autochthonous inhabitants of the Greek state who believe in Christ are Greeks. But it distinguishes other categories as well, such as “all those who have escaped the Ottoman yoke and have come [to Greece] and believe in Christ [obviously, regardless of ethnic origin] and all those whose father is a Greek.”¹⁷⁷ Although the Greek approach was an increasingly inconsistent mixture of civil and ethnic criteria, legally the non-ethnic, religious criterion, inherited from the *millet* system and probably reinforced by civil nationalist considerations, clearly remained influential for a long time.

Conclusion

The chief goal of this study was to explain that in the Ottoman pre-national(ist) era, cultural phenomena in the Balkans cannot be studied adequately unless put within a Balkan context. To that end, I rather schematically distinguished three levels that in fact are chronologically and developmentally interrelated: the “ethnographic” level of low culture, which includes language; the “cultural” level of high culture, where religion is the determining factor of group formation, and finally a “political” level, at which the religious community started developing into a rudimentary civil proto-nation.

The “Balkan cultural union,” at the ethnographic level, dealt with as a conceptual extension of the “Balkan language union,” cannot be framed chronologically. Its formation started in prehistory, and modern nation-building did not succeed in fully destroying it; sometimes, its presence is even felt as a subversively “Balkan” refutation of the European national identities Balkan intellectuals have so tenaciously been constructing. The Orthodox Christian or Romaic community emerged slowly after the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans and reached its apogee by the end of the eighteenth century and—in those regions then still under Ottoman rule—the first decades of the nineteenth century. The feeling of commonality and solidarity it created was irreparably damaged during the Second Balkan War; what has remained of it is a masked unanimity vis-à-vis the real or imagined threat of Islam. By the end of the eighteenth century, a Romaic civil proto-nation began to develop as a result of the penetration

¹⁷⁷ *Politikon Syntagma tis Ellados*, <http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/f3c70a23-7696-49db-9148-f24dce6a27c8/syn09.pdf>.

of “French” political thought in the Balkans. It consisted of representatives of the urban elite, the bourgeoisie, which was in the Balkans, as in Western Europe, the most dynamic and progressive social class, displaying the highest degree of political awareness. Before long, however, its development was reversed due to the diffusion of “German” or *ethnic* nationalism, which proved to be more vigorous.

At all these levels—or, from a chronological point of view, in all these stages—the members of the respective communities developed (partly overlapping) collective identities, in which ethnicity had only a limited, if any, political relevance. Within the Balkan cultural union, ethnic entities tended to merge with each other into one single common Balkan low culture, which was regionally, not ethnically—let alone nationally—diversified. Within the Romaic community, self-identification obviously occurred along religious and not ethnic lines. Finally, during the short period of abortive civil community-building, ethnic identity gave way to universal civilizational values. Only nineteenth-century nationalism brought ethnicity to the fore as the basic principle of community-building with such an overwhelming persuasive force that, ever since, many have considered it a universal and timeless way of social organization and collective self-identification.

Given the limited scope of this study, I avoided entering into polemics with ethnocentric or nationalist historiography, as this would have required considerable additional argumentation. On the other hand, I am aware that challenging the obsolete, but still mighty paradigm of the primordially of ethnic and national identity could mislead us into over-emphasizing other forms of collective self-identification. To avoid misunderstanding, let me repeat: by pointing out the predominance of other ways of collective self-identification, I do not want to suggest that there was no awareness of ethnic identity at all or that ethnic groups did not exist. My claim is that in the pre-national(ist) period, identification with an ethnic community was far less important and less morally obliging than identification with a religious community. As Maria Todorova notes, “The crucial criterion should not be the potential presence in the human psyche of the characteristics that identify an ethnicity, but the proof that the combination of these characteristics was dominant as a form of group identification (for example, ethnicity) over other forms of group identification (religion, caste, kin, localism, and so on) at any given point of historical time.”¹⁷⁸ From the sixteenth century through the first half of the

¹⁷⁸ Todorova, “Ethnicity, Nationalism,” 94–95.

nineteenth century, the perspective from which one perceived oneself and others and the main source of not only moral, but also aesthetic and other values was religion and the community of coreligionists. Religion was not a component of ethnic identity; instead, ethnic communities were local and—from the point of view of moral obligations—irrelevant cultural varieties distinguishable within the religious community. Societal and cultural phenomena should be explained accordingly.

Another warning concerns my assertion that members of the Romaic community often called themselves “Greeks,” in the sense of “Orthodox Christians,” and spoke Greek. I am far removed from the idea that these people thought of themselves as ethnic Greeks, although in the nineteenth century many of them acquired a Greek national consciousness. Prior to the late eighteenth century, ethnic consciousness among the Greeks was not more developed or definite than among Albanians, Bulgarians, Serbs, Vlachs and others; they all felt they were mainly “just” Orthodox Christians.

Finally, the Romaic community should not be imagined as a community with clear-cut distinctive features and strong internal coherence. Neither should it be thought of as ideologically homogeneous. The Romaic community was loose, open and unarticulated, especially compared to the national communities that emerged in the nineteenth century: it lacked forceful state institutions, a national standard language imposed by that state, a more or less official history (or historical mythology) taught at schools, a solidarity forged through victorious wars and even more so through national catastrophes. Nevertheless, it was a community in its own right, with its own identity and its own cultural achievements. It should not be perceived, because of its lack of clear-cut ethnic or national distinctiveness, as “immature” or “incomplete,” or, as it is so often regarded, as merely a transitional stage that deserves attention only to the extent that it ushered in the nation as the supposed final goal of historical development.

As a rule, traditional historiography of the national revival period in the Balkans accepts in theory the predominance of religion over ethnicity as a source of values in the pre-national(ist) era. In practice it continues to deal with the past from an ethnocentric point of view, focusing on ethnic communities gradually developing into national ones. However, projecting the nation into the past and referring to that projection in order to explain the emergence of the nation is a deceptive approach. The root of the issue is to elucidate how the shift in loyalty from a religious to a national community, from a religious to a national(ist) value system, from

God to the nation actually occurred. Replacing the *ethnie* with the religious community as the focus of historical analysis—that is, perceiving ethnic communities as local varieties within the religious community instead of seeing religion as merely a component of ethnic identity—may appear to be a kind of Copernican revolution, hardly acceptable to conventional understanding. However, it is likely to offer a more adequate explanation of societal and cultural phenomena in the Balkan pre-national era.

FROM IMPERIAL ENTANGLEMENTS TO
NATIONAL DISENTANGLEMENT: THE “GREEK QUESTION”
IN MOLDAVIA AND WALLACHIA, 1611–1863

Constantin Iordachi

In 1611 a group of Wallachian boyars led by the High Steward (*mare stolnic*) Bărcan of Merișani plotted the assassination of the prince Radu Mihnea (1586–1626). The attack was intended as retaliation for the fact that Radu Mihnea “surrounded himself with numerous Greeks from Istanbul and Rumeli,” as a local chronicler reports.¹ The plot was soon discovered by Radu Mihnea, who decapitated Bărcan along with eight other great boyars. This dramatic episode—the first instance in the Principalities’ history when “blood was spilled because of the Greeks” (according to the historian A.D. Xenopol)²—marked the outbreak of the “Greek question” in Moldavia and Wallachia, as the Romantic historiographical school would retrospectively call it.³ Over the next two centuries (1611–1821), this “question” unfolded as a succession of violent anti-Greek plots, uprisings and legal campaigns of the local nobility and merchants against the unchecked penetration and political dominance of Ottoman Greeks. To list only the most important: after the initial 1611 plot, a second major anti-Greek uprising took place during Alexandru Ilias’s rule (1616–1618); a third under Alexandru Coconul (r. 1623–1627); a fourth under Leon Tomșa (r. 1629–1633); a fifth under Matei Basarab (r. 1633–1654); a sixth under Radu Leon (r. 1664–1669); a seventh under Nicolae Mavrocordat (r. 1716–1717); and an eighth under Ioan Caragea, culminating with the 1821 failed cooperation and eventual conflict between Tudor Vladimirescu and the Greek underground organization Philiki Hetaireia (Society of Friends), leading to the end of Phanariot rule.

¹ See *Istoria Țării Românești 1290–1690. Letopisețul Cantacuzinesc*, ed. by Constantin Grecescu and Dan Simonescu (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Romîne, 1960), 90.

² A.D. Xenopol, *Istoria românilor din Dacia Traiană* (Iași: Tipo-litografia H. Goldner, 1890), vol. 3, 448–449.

³ In this chapter I employ the term “Greek question” to refer to the political and legal conflicts and historiographical debates over the legal status and role played by the Ottoman Greeks who migrated permanently or temporarily to the Principalities between 1611 and 1863.

This violent, apparently interethnic, conflict might seem anomalous in a society that did not operate with a clear concept of citizenship, enforced by territorial jurisdiction and with clear distinctions between citizens and foreigners. The line between inhabitants and foreigners could easily be crossed. Once they settled in the country with the intention of remaining there and gained employment or dependency status and paid taxes, foreigners *de facto* assimilated and became regular inhabitants.⁴ In many instances, the prince invited into the country certain “professional” categories of foreigners and employed them in important economic activities, or in the military. Foreigners were visible mainly in cities, where they practiced trades and crafts, organized into professional guilds. Rural and urban colonization resulted in a multiethnic and multi-religious population in both Principalities. In his 1716 work *Descriptio Moldaviae*, written for the Academy of Berlin, Prince Dimitrie Cantemir (r. 1693, 1710–1711) provided a vivid account of Moldavia’s ethnic and religious diversity: “I hardly believe there is another country as small as Moldavia that contains as many different peoples. Aside from Moldavians, whose ancestors came from Maramureș, many Greeks, Albanians, Serbs, Bulgarians, Poles, Cossacks, Russians, Germans, Armenians, Jews and many Gypsies settled in Moldavia” and “live there freely.”⁵ According to his estimates, in both Principalities ethnic and religious minorities made up one-tenth of the population. How can one account, then, for such a dramatic outburst of violence between the local boyars and the Ottoman Greeks, involving plots and popular anti-Ottoman revolts, many of them accompanied by public lynching and widespread violence? How can the resilience of this conflict, spanning over two centuries, be explained?

⁴ For the status of Ottoman subjects in the Principalities, see Maria Bulgaru Alexandrescu-Dersca, “Sur le régime des ressortissants ottomans en Walachie (1711–1829),” *Studii: Revista de istorie* 14, no. 1 (1961): 87–113; and Maria Bulgaru Alexandrescu-Dersca, “Sur le régime des ressortissants ottomans en Moldavie (1711–1829),” *Studia et Acta Orientalia* (Bucharest) 5–6 (1967): 143–182. For the status of foreigners, see Jean D. Condurachi, *Cîteva cuvinte asupra condiției juridice a străinilor în Moldova și Țara Românească pînă la Regulamentul Organic* (Bucharest: Cultura, 1918); and Michel. B. Boeresco, *Étude sur la condition des étrangers d’après la législation roumaine rapprochée de la législation française. Thèse pour le doctorat* (Paris: V. Girard et E. Briere, 1899).

⁵ Dimitrie Cantemir, *Principatus Moldaviae Nova & Accurata Descriptio* ([Amsterdam], 1737), first translated into Romanian by Vasile Vârnav as *Scrisoarea Moldovei* (Mănăstirea Neamț, 1825). Quotations in this chapter are from a later edition: *Descrierea Moldovei* (Bucharest: Socec, 1909), here 214 (my translation).

The "Greek question" in the Principalities has been subjected to intensive research over several centuries.⁶ Due to its far-reaching implications, the topic has been heavily politicized, as historiography became, early on, a major terrain of political confrontation between rival local vs. Ottoman Greek political factions. Standard treatments of the "Greek question" approach the topic from the perspective of the history of "Greek-Romanian relations," focusing on the cultural and sociopolitical interaction of the "two peoples" from ancient times to the present.⁷ Such primordialist perspectives are problematic on several counts. First, they assume the existence of fixed and internally unified "Greek" and "Romanian" identities that transcend centuries. From this perspective, ethnic groups are treated as unified actors that share a common identity and interest and speak with one voice, thus running the risk of "groupism."⁸ Second, this ahistorical treatment divorces the relations between the two groups from their actual sociopolitical context, as if the only forces at work shaping the dynamics of these entanglements were philo- vs. anti-Hellenism.

⁶ From the huge bibliography of the topic, I mention A.D. Xenopol, *Istoria românilor din Dacia Traiană*; "Les Roumains et les Grecs," *Revue de géographie* 28 (January–June 1891), 38–50; and *Epoca fanarioților 1711–1821* (Iași: Goldner, 1892); Nicolae Iorga, *Cultura română supt fanarioți* (Bucharest: Socec, 1898); and *Istoria literaturii române în secolul al XVIII-lea (1688–1821)*, 2 vols. (Bucharest: Minerva, 1901). C.V. Obedeau, *Grecii în Țara-Românească* (Bucharest: I.V. Socec, 1900), 12; Demostene Russo, *Studii istorice Greco-Române. Opere postume*, 2 vols. (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură și artă "Regele Carol II," 1939). On the huge body of works on Phanariot rule in the Principalities, which is a distinct historiographic stream, see note 104.

⁷ For recent publications on Greek-Romanian relations, see the activity of Omonia Publishing House, established in 1991 in Bucharest to promote modern Greek culture in Romania. Omonia has published over sixty literary works from modern Hellenic literature in Romanian translation and over fifteen titles on the history of Hellenism in Romania and of Romanian-Hellenic relations, as well as numerous biographical dictionaries and bibliographies. Among the latter, I mention Stelian Brezeanu, Constantin Iordan, Horia C. Matei, Tudor Teoteoi and Gheorghe Zbucnea, *Relațiile româno-elene. O istorie cronologică*, 2003; Athanasios E. Karathanasis, *Elenismul în Transilvania*, 2003; Maria Marinescu-Himiu, *Dialoguri culturale româno-grecești. Studii*, 2004; Paula Scalcău, *Grecii din România*, 2nd ed., 2005; Elena Lazăr, *Literatura neolenă în România (1837–2005). O bibliografie*, 2005; Leonidas Rados, *Sub semnul acvilei. Preocupări de bizantinistică în România până la 1918*, 2005; Paula Scalcău, *Elenismul în România. O istorie cronologică*, 2006, published in English as *Hellenism in Romania: A Chronological History*, 2007; Leonidas Rados, ed., *Școlile grecești în România (1857–1905). Restituții documentare*, 2006; and Elena Lazăr, *Interferențe literare româno-elene*, 2007.

⁸ For a sharp critique of the fallacy of reification of groups in social sciences ("groupism") and the argument for an alternative micro-historical approach to analyzing ethnicity without bounded groups, see Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

More recently, the topic has been approached by Romanian, Greek and foreign historians from new theoretical and methodological perspectives.⁹ The current essay is in line with these recent historiographical trends but approaches the “Greek question” in the Principalities from a different analytical angle, regarding it as an outcome of the struggle for power between two competing oligarchies: a local one and an Ottoman imperial one. Naturally, it is not my aim to provide an exhaustive treatment of all manifestations and implications of the “Greek question” during these two centuries. I am mainly concerned with *the emergence of modern citizenship* as a product of this oligarchic struggle for political pre-eminence in Moldavia and Wallachia, two tributary states on the Ottoman Empire’s European borderland. I argue that, in its initial stage, the development of modern citizenship legislation in Moldavia and Wallachia was triggered by their complex interaction with the Ottoman Empire, as a reaction to the substantial increase in the economic and financial burden placed on them by the imperial center; and to the gradual penetration of Ottoman subjects into the Principalities and their accession to the ranks of the nobility, a fact that directly endangered the political monopoly of the local nobles. Facing a dramatic increase in their pecuniary duties to the Porte, local princes became deeply concerned with fiscal stability, since their political survival depended on it. Consequently, they initiated a campaign of centralization meant to keep in check the growing power

⁹ See Ștefan Lemny, “La critique du régime phanariote: clichés mentaux et perspectives historiographiques,” in *Culture and Society: Structures, Interferences, Analogies in the Modern Romanian History*, ed. Alexandru Zub (Iași: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1985), 17–30; Vlad Georgescu, *The Romanians: A History* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991), esp. 73–121; Keith Hitchins, *The Romanians, 1774–1866* (Oxford: Clarendon University Press, 1996), esp. 121–124; Bogdan Murgescu, “Phanariots and Pământeni: Religion and Ethnicity in Shaping Identities in the Romanian Principalities and the Ottoman Empire,” in *Ethnicity and Religion in Central and Eastern Europe*, eds. Maria Crăciun and Ovidiu Ghitta (Cluj-Napoca: Cluj University Press, 1995), 196–204; Bogdan Murgescu, “Confessional Polemics and Political Imperatives in the Romanian Principalities (Late 17th–Early 18th Centuries),” in *Church and Society in Central and Eastern Europe*, eds. Maria Crăciun and Ovidiu Ghitta (Cluj-Napoca: European Studies Foundation Publishing House, 1998), 174–183; Alex Drake-Francis, *The Making of Modern Romanian Culture: Literacy and the Development of National Identity* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2006); Paschalis M. Kitromilides and Anna Tabaki, eds., *Relations Gréco-Roumaines: Interculturalité et Identité Nationale/Greek-Romanian Relations: Interculturalism and National Identity* (Athens: Institute for Neohellenic Research, 2004); Nikos Panou, “Greek-Romanian Symbiotic Patterns in the Early Modern Period: History, Mentalities, Institutions—I,” *Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 3 (2006): 71–110; “Greek-Romanian Symbiotic Patterns in the Early Modern Period: History, Mentalities, Institutions—II,” *Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 4 (2007): 59–104; and Christine M. Philliou, *Biography of an Empire: Practicing Ottoman Governance in the Age of Revolutions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

of the local great boyars. The princes' campaign toward administrative and fiscal centralization led to a conflict with the local great boyars. This conflict was fueled by two opposing views on the Principalities' form of government: an autocratic political order based on the centralizing power of the prince vs. a "nobiliary regime (*stat boieresc*)" resembling the Hungarian or Polish models. The two parties promoted two rival models of imperial integration: the local boyar classes of Wallachia and Moldavia favored an aristocratic commonwealth with Transylvania and the Kingdom of Poland, respectively, where they found shelter and military support in times of crisis. The pro-Ottoman faction favored close integration with the Ottoman Empire and relied on the Ottoman Greeks' imperial networks of mediation and support. The conflict of interests between these two oligarchic groups—the "nobility of blood" claimed by the local great boyars vs. an emerging Ottoman Greek "nobility of office," recruited by the prince mainly from the ranks of the Greek Ottoman subjects and assigned posts of high influence in the administration—stimulated the development of citizenship legislation. In response to the penetration of the Ottoman Greeks, local nobles called for a clearer administrative separation from the Ottoman Empire and a strict regulation of the status of Ottoman subjects in the Principalities. To this end, they developed the existing local custom into a legal doctrine known as *drit de pământean* (the right of the natives) and instrumentalized it against the Ottoman elite migrants, demanding either their naturalization and thus their integration and subordination to local networks in the Principalities, or their expulsion. The campaign against the Ottoman Greeks was also connected to acute social and political grievances of the lower and middle strata of the urban population and the boyar class, including claims for tax exemption and confirmation of privileges, clear evidence of the social implications the "Greek question" acquired in Moldavia and Wallachia.

Methodologically, the "Greek question" in the Principalities cannot be studied using a classical comparative framework juxtaposing distinct, neatly defined and internally unified analytical units or, in this case, ethnic communities, in order to identify similarities and differences. Instead, the topic requires the exploration of a complex web of interactions and entanglements among multiple actors who functioned at various levels and in different but also overlapping local, regional and imperial contexts. First, I argue that, as contested borderlands between the Ottoman Empire, Transylvania, the Habsburg Empire, the Kingdom of Poland and Russia, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Moldavia and Wallachia were led by polycentric elites, who gravitated around rival imperial centers of power

and were animated by competing political models: patrimonial (the Ottoman one), autocratic and later enlightened absolutist (in its Russian or Habsburg variants) or aristocratic (of Polish influence in Moldavia and of Transylvanian Hungarian influence in Wallachia). This geopolitical rivalry generated unstable yet persistent power networks that competed for political predominance. These networks cannot be studied in isolation from each other. At certain times, one of the parties could impose its hegemony; at times of military upheaval, however, these power networks existed side by side or even exercised their jurisdictions concomitantly over parts of the Principalities' territories. Second, I contend that, in the geopolitical context described above, Ottoman Greek–Moldo/Wallachian relations exhibit a case of entangled history *par excellence*, the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia functioning during the time as an important laboratory for the elaboration of modern Greek and Romanian national ideologies. On the one hand, the “Greek question” was a catalyst of social and political change in the Principalities, informing local political power struggles and accounting, so I argue, for the incipient birth of citizenship as a modern legal status. On the other hand, the Principalities were a hub of neo-Byzantine and Hellenic culture, a site of experimentation and articulation of new forms of collective identities. They also served as a territorial base for the Greek national struggle, sheltered as they were from direct Ottoman interference. From this perspective, the rise of the Romanian national movement cannot be understood without considering the role Hellenic scholars played in spreading the values of the Enlightenment and in elaborating the first notions of national identity, fatherland and patriotism. Likewise, the rise of the Greek national struggle in 1821 cannot be fully understood without examining the activity of the Greek scholars and revolutionaries in the Principalities. Romanian and Greek national movements thus appear to be twin phenomena, entangled products of the late Ottoman and wider European contexts that later turned into distinct, and at times even rival, nationalisms. Thus, to account for the complex range of Ottoman Greek–Moldo/Wallachian interactions, reciprocal influences and entanglements within the socio-political context of the Ottoman Empire, one needs to engage with the history of transfers, shared or entangled histories and *histoire croisée*, and to employ a relational approach that posits that the identities and actions of the actors under scrutiny can only be understood within the complex web of their close relationship and interaction with each other. These new approaches and research perspectives shift the analytical emphasis from isolated units of comparison to multiple levels of interaction, at various

subnational or supranational levels. In addition, the chapter is in line with the new academic trend of shifting the scholarly focus from generic categories and groupings to "identification and categorization, self-understanding and social location, commonality and connectedness."¹⁰ This approach is particularly relevant for studying forms of multiple and overlapping collective identities in the societal context of the Ottoman Empire in the early modern period. As is well known, the Ottoman legal-political system was largely indifferent to ethnicity; official notions of the hierarchical classification of the inhabitants were primarily a function of their religious affiliation and social status or occupation. In addition, during the period covered in this chapter, the meaning of generic terms such as "Greeks," "Albanians" and "Turks" changed gradually, both in the official imperial discourse and in the self-understanding or self-identification of the peoples living in the empire, from predominantly social categories in the pre-nationalist age to modern ethno-national categories in the age of nationalism.

In view of these methodological considerations, instead of focusing on immutable identities over time, my essay explores the process of making and remaking of collective identity projects and their conscious construction and re-articulation as an outcome of the complex interaction among various societal actors and interest groups. From this perspective, the generic categories of "Greeks" and "Romanians," routinely employed by studies on this topic,¹¹ need ample methodological clarifications. I treat the two groups in conflict, the Ottoman Greeks vs. local boyars, as variable categories produced and reproduced during the political process. On the one hand, the term "Greeks" should be treated as a wide generic term that included not only the Phanariot rulers and their clientele (*clientela* or *protipendada*, meaning their camarilla, entourage or business associates) but also Hellenized Balkan ecclesiastic or merchant elites of Serbian,

¹⁰ Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 4.

¹¹ Generally, Romanian historians did not problematize the meaning and usage of the generic terms "Romanians" and "Greeks" but used them indiscriminately for medieval, early modern and modern periods. This is manifest even in the highly valuable volume *Symposium. L'Époque phanariote. 21–25 octobre 1970. à la mémoire de Cléobule Tsurkas* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1974). Traian Ionescu-Nișcov goes as far as to argue that during Phanariot rule, due to the Greek immigration, the two Principalities "lost their character of national states," in "L'époque phanariote dans l'historiographie roumaine et étrangère," *Symposium L'époque phanariote*, 147. For a significant exception, see Drake-Francis, *The Making of Modern Romanian Culture*, 21–22.

Albanian, Bulgarian or even Romanian ethnic extraction.¹² Following Moldavian prince Dimitrie Cantemir's 1723 suggestion, they should indeed be called "Graecians" rather than Greeks.¹³

On the other hand, the category of "natives" or "locals" for the Wallachian or Moldavian boyars does not suggest the existence of a modern (pan-) Romanian national identity *avant la lettre*. In fact, "the natives" was not an ethnic but a legal-political label constructed along the lines of an autochthonist discourse that referred to all the local inhabitants of the Principalities either born in the land or who obtained naturalization,¹⁴ as opposed to foreigners, mostly the Istanbul-based Greeks (*greci țarigrădeni*) called *străini* or *venetici*. It is telling in this respect that, for much of the period under consideration, the leader of the "local party" was the Cantacuzino family, with Byzantine roots but long naturalized in Wallachia,¹⁵ while among the rival, "Greek-Phanariot faction," one finds families of Romanian origins (the Racovițas and the Calimachis) or even Albanian origins (the Ghicas).¹⁶ Although the incipient elements of a pan-Romanian identity

¹² For the Hellenization of the Balkan Orthodox merchant class, see Traian Stoianovich, "The Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant," *Journal of Economic History* (June 1960) 20: 234–313. Stoianovich points out that the emerging Balkan Orthodox merchant class was ethnically very heterogeneous, encompassing Greek traders, sailors, and shippers, Albanian sailors, and shippers, Vlach and Macedo-Slav muleteers of Epirus, Thessaly, and Macedonia, Serbian pig-merchants of Šumadija, Herzegovina, "Illyrian" muleteers of Herzegovina and Dalmatia, and Bulgarian merchants of the eastern Rhodopes.

¹³ "For I call not them Greeks who are born in Greece, but those who have transferred the Grecian learning and institutions to themselves. It is justly said by Isocrates in one of his Panegyrics, I had rather call them Graecians, who are Partakers of our Discipline, than those who only share with us the same common birth and nature." In Dimitrie Cantemir, "The History of the Ottoman Empire," *Dimitrie Cantemir, Historian of Southeast European and Oriental Civilizations*, eds. Alexander Duțu and Paul Cernovodeanu (Bucharest: Association internationale d'études du sud-est européen, 1973), trans. from Latin by N. Tindal, cited in Christine Philliou, "Communities on the Verge: Unraveling the Phanariot Ascendancy in Ottoman Governance," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 1 (2009): 157.

¹⁴ In *Descriptio Moldaviae*, Cantemir lists the names of seventy-five old boyar families in Moldavia, indicating that no less than twelve of them were assimilated foreigners: seven Greek (Cantacuzinii, Tudureștii, Niculeștii, Paladeștii, Razii, Roseteștii, Hrisorvergi), two Polish (Crupenșcheștii, Pisoscheștii), one Serbian (Costineștii), one Tatar (his own family, Cantemir), and one Circassian (Cerchezeștii). Cantemir, *Descrierea Moldovei*, 208–209.

¹⁵ Ironically, Stefan Cantacuzino, who is celebrated by the historian Obedeanu as the "last prince of Romanian nationality" and a martyr for the national cause, was himself a descendent of the Byzantine Cantacuzino family naturalized in the Principalities. Obedeanu, *Grecii în Țara-Românească*, 14.

¹⁶ Incidentally, the Racoviță and Calimachi families brought to the Principalities a more numerous Greek entourage than the other "proper" Greek-Phanariot families: Ottoman Greeks held 32 percent of the total number of seats in the princely *divan* during the reign of Ion T. Calimachi (1758–1761) in Moldavia, and 33.3 percent during Ștefan Racoviță's

discourse were being elaborated during this period, one cannot yet speak of the existence of a modern national consciousness. In historiography, the generic term "Romanians" began to be employed mostly in the seventeenth century by humanist writers to refer to their ethnic kin living in Moldavia, Wallachia, and also in Transylvania, as illustrated, among others, by Miron Costin's 1686 usage of the term¹⁷ or Cantemir's 1719 composite label "Româno-Moldo-Vlahi."¹⁸ The term "Romanians" entered general use in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, as seen, for example, in Ionică Tăutu's 1829 proclamation addressed to his Romanian brothers (*frații români*).¹⁹ My analysis does not take a teleological perspective, assuming a direct and inevitable road from pre-modern ethnîe to modern national identities. Instead, I am interested in the articulation of the identity discourses of the two interest groups in conflict, the locals vs. the Ottoman Greeks, both as categories of political praxis and as weapons in the local or larger imperial power struggles, and the way these discourses and the generic identity labels associated with them were constructed in constant interaction and cross-fertilization among historical actors, but also in opposition and conflict. I contend that the "Greek question" cannot be explained simply by the rise of xenophobia against the Greeks but instead was a symptom of a more generalized sociopolitical crisis in the two Principalities, generated by the ever-growing economic demands of Ottoman rule and the domestic struggles over access to resources and the nature of the political regime.

reign in Wallachia (1764–1765), the highest and second highest proportions, respectively, during the entire Phanariot period. See Ion Ionașcu, "Le degré de l'influence des Grecs des Principautés Roumaines dans la vie politique de ces pays," in *Symposium. L'Epoque phanariote. 21–25 octobre 1970. A la mémoire de Cléobule Tsurkas*, 226–227. This fact confirms that the dividing line between the two groups was not ethnic origin but oligarchic interests.

¹⁷ See Miron Costin, *De Neamul Moldovenilor, din ce țară au eșit strămoșii lor*, written ca. 1686 and first published in Romanian in 1852 by Mihail Kogălniceanu under the title *Cartea pentru descălecatul de nteiu a Terei Moldovei și Nemului Moldovenescu*, in *Cronicele Romaniței, Seû Letopiseele Moldaviei ș Valahiei*, 3 vols. (Bucharest: Imprimeria Națională, 1872), vol. 1, 1–84; republished as Miron Costin, *De Neamul Moldovenilor, din ce țară au eșit strămoșii lor*, ed. Constantin Giurescu (Bucharest: Socec, 1914). The work deals with "the beginning of these countries and of the Moldavian and Wallachian people and [of those living] in the Hungarian lands with this name, *Romanians*, till today" (1872: 1). For more evidence on this point, see Georgescu, *The Romanians: A History*, 70–71.

¹⁸ Cantemir Dimitrie, *Hronicul Vechimei a Româno-Moldo-Vlahilor* (Bucharest: Carol Göbl, 1901), written between 1719 and 1722 and left unfinished. It was published by Societatea Academică Română as vol. 8 in the series *Operele Principelui Demetriu Cantemiru*.

¹⁹ See "Manifest adresat către 'Frații Români'" in Ionică Tăutu, 1795–1830. *Scrieri social-politice*, ed. Emil Vărtosu (Bucharest: Editura Stiintifică, 1974), 286.

The essay is structured in several interrelated parts focusing on the following components of the processes of Greek–Moldo/Wallachian imperial entanglements and nationalist disentanglement: the Byzantine influence in the Principalities before and after the collapse of the Byzantine Empire (1453); the economic and political role played by Greek migrants in the Principalities within the regime of Ottoman domination; the emergence of the “Greek question” in the Principalities, its forms of manifestation and its impact on the emergence of citizenship as a nascent modern legal status; the rule of the Phanariot princes (which started in 1711 in Wallachia and in 1716 in Moldavia and lasted until 1821), and the political and economic role and status of their clientele; the restoration of the rule by native princes (1821); the adoption of the Organic Statutes (1831); the secularization of the dedicated monasteries; and finally, kin-minority policies in modern Romania and Greece. Since the Greek Ottoman elite migration affected Wallachia as well as Moldavia, my analysis will focus on both Principalities, in an effort to identify the similarities and differences between its societal impact and long-term implications in both societies. In this respect, it should be noted that, until the mid-seventeenth century, Greek penetration was much stronger in Wallachia than in Moldavia, due to the former’s geographical proximity to the Ottoman territory and the fact that the Wallachian Church was, from its very inception, under the heavy influence of the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchy. As a matter of fact, the growing Greek penetration in Moldavia and the practice of transferring princes from the Wallachian to the Moldavian thrones, specific to the regime of Ottoman suzerainty contributed much to the homogenization of the legislation and internal organization of the two Principalities, paving the way toward their political unity.

1. Byzance après Byzance: *The Byzantine Model in Moldavia and Wallachia as the Foundation of Hellenic-Romanian Interactions*

The Hellenic-Romanian entanglements in the early modern period cannot be understood without tackling the Byzantine influence in Moldavia and Wallachia and the way this legacy was appropriated and perpetuated in the nascent Principalities, as it was primarily the Byzantine cultural-religious matrix that paved the road to what was to be an exceptionally intense pattern of Hellenic-Romanian interactions.

Ever since their establishment in the fourteenth century as distinct Principalities, Moldavia and Wallachia fell into the political and religious

sphere of influence of the Byzantine Empire. Their sociopolitical organization emulated the Byzantine political tradition, based on the autocratic power of the prince and the intertwined relationship between state and church. This model was nevertheless adapted to local conditions and combined, in the post-Byzantine period, with Ottoman and Central European influences, ultimately resulting into an original political synthesis.

The reception and adaptation of the Byzantine religious, legal and political traditions in the Principalities was a long-term process that can be traced through several periods: before the 1453 collapse of the Byzantine Empire; from 1453 until the establishment of Phanariot regime (1711/1718); and during the Phanariot regimes until the restoration of rule by native princes (1821) and the adoption of the Organic Statutes (1831). According to historian Valentin Al. Georgescu—a major student of the Byzantine impact on the Principalities—until the collapse of the empire in 1453, Byzantine influence was rather diffuse.²⁰ In that period the internal organization of the Principalities was still developing, while the Byzantine state was already weakened by the Ottoman pressure and had only a symbolic political presence north of the Danube. Paradoxically, the Byzantine legal-political model was crystallized, amplified and spread mostly after the collapse of the empire; from this perspective, one should speak not of a functioning “Byzantine model” but about the reception of the Byzantine “legacy.”

The Byzantine legacy was a rich, vibrant and self-perpetuating tradition, continuously recreated and disseminated by the political elites of the Balkan Principalities or even by the Ottoman elites in a conscious or unconscious osmosis. Commenting on the remarkable perpetuation and re-creation of the Byzantine model in the post-Byzantine Balkans, as well as in parts of Central and Eastern Europe, the Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga evocatively called this process *Byzance après Byzance*.²¹ Although Iorga mainly emphasized the continuity of the Byzantine legacy in Moldavia and Wallachia, he also highlighted the adaptation of this legacy to local conditions.²² Following in Iorga's footsteps, Andrei Pippidi pointed

²⁰ Valentin Al. Georgescu, *Bizantul și instituțiile românești* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1980), 16.

²¹ Nicolae Iorga, *Byzance après Byzance. Continuation de l'“Histoire de la vie byzantine”* (Bucharest: Editions de l'Institut d'études byzantines, 1935).

²² Iorga speaks about the perpetuation of Byzantium (calling it *Byzance immortelle*) “as a complex of institutions, as a political system, as a religious formation, as a type of civilization, made up of the Hellenic intellectual heritage, Roman law, the Orthodox religion,

out the emulation of the Byzantine *political* tradition in the Principalities, which he defined as “principles of state leadership evolving into a consistent doctrine due to their large acceptance by the dominant class over several generations.”²³ While building on Iorga’s conceptual framework, Pippidi argued that the Byzantine tradition in the two Principalities was “diffused” and cannot be easily separated from other political influences with which it was combined, mostly the Ottoman one.

Besides being diffused, the Byzantine influence in the Principalities was also multifaceted, appearing in such fields as political ideology, state and church organization, canonic and canonic-civil law, and art and architecture.²⁴ This influence was exercised either directly, through the Byzantine presence prior to 1453,²⁵ or indirectly, mediated via the Serbian and Bulgarian examples in adapting the Byzantine model or through the experience of the Balkan Christian elites who settled permanently or temporarily in the Principalities, mostly Serb and, later, Greek or Hellenized Ottoman elites.²⁶

The main channel of Byzantine influence in the Principalities was the Orthodox Church. The adoption of Eastern Orthodox Christianity in Moldavia and Wallachia was arguably one of the most important geopolitical “victories” of the late Byzantine Empire against the advance of Catholicism at a critical moment in its history.²⁷ The establishment of metropolitan seats in both Principalities nevertheless occasioned a power struggle

and all it generated in terms of art.” Iorga, *Byzance après Byzance*, 8 (my translation from French).

²³ Andrei Pippidi, *Tradiția politică bizantină în țările române în secolele XVI–XVIII* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1983), 6.

²⁴ On a comprehensive but concise presentation of the Byzantine influence and legacy in Romania, see Dennis J. Deletant, “Some Aspects of the Byzantine Tradition in the Rumanian Principalities,” *Slavonic and East European Review* 59, no. 1 (1981): 1–14.

²⁵ For instance, in 1472, the Moldavian prince Stephen the Great married Maria Asanina Paleologhina of Mangup, who was from a Byzantine aristocratic family related to the Byzantine emperors Komnenos and the Paleologes, and the sister of Alexander, prince of the small principality of Theodoro (Gothia) in southwestern Crimea. On her life, see Maria Magdalena Székely and Ștefan S. Gorovei, *Maria Asanina Paleologhina. O prințesă bizantină pe tronul Moldovei* (Putna Sfânta Mănăstire Putna; Suceava: Mușatinii, 2006).

²⁶ See the Serbian families Branković, Balšić and Jakšić or the Montenegrin family Crnojević, in Petere Chihaia, *Tradiții răsăritene și influențe occidentale în Țara Românească* (Bucharest, 1993), 101, 102; see also Pippidi, *Tradiția politică bizantină*, 20–23; and Claudiu Neagoe, “Mari dregători și negustori greci în Țara Românească în a doua jumătate a veacului al XVII-lea” *Istros* 13 (2006): 215–223.

²⁷ Vitalien Laurent, “Contributions a l’histoire des relations de l’Eglise byzantine avec l’Eglise roumaine au début du XV^e siècle,” *Académie Roumaine. Bulletin de la Section historique* 26, no. 2 (1945), 165.

between the local princes and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, eager to curtail any tendency toward local autonomy of the two new churches. The Metropolitan of Moldavia was documented for the first time in 1386 and had its seat in Rădăuți (moved to Iași in the second half of the seventeenth century).²⁸ The first known archbishop of Moldavia was Iosif Mușat, related to the local Mușat dynasty and ordained bishop of Cetatea Albă by the Metropolitan of Halici. Attempting to impose a Greek cleric in Moldavia, the Ecumenical Patriarchate delayed Iosif's official recognition until July 26, 1401, when he was finally confirmed in office. The Metropolitanate of Wallachia (*Mitropolia Ungrovlahiei*) was officially recognized in 1359, with the capital in Câmpulung and later in Curtea de Argeș. Unlike in Moldavia, the first Metropolitan of the Wallachian Church was a Greek cleric, Iachint Cristopulo, former Metropolitan of Vicina, in northern Dobrudja, a fact that testifies to the Ecumenical Patriarchy's greater influence in that principality.

The geopolitical importance of the two Principalities for the Orthodox Commonwealth increased significantly after the fall of the empire in 1453. At that time Moldavia and Wallachia played an important role in the perpetuation and dissemination of the Byzantine legacy since, unlike the other Balkan Principalities, they managed to preserve their internal administrative and legislative autonomy. In this context, in its efforts to preserve its dominant status within the Orthodox world, the Ecumenical Patriarchate became more and more dependent on the temporal and financial support of Moldavian and Wallachian princes. At the same time, seeking to use the spiritual authority and prestige of the Orthodox Church to bolster their own political legitimacy, native princes in the two Principalities not only perpetuated the Byzantine legacy but also acted as substitutes of the Byzantine *basileum* in relation to the Orthodox Church, cultivating strong ties with the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople and claiming the rights of protecting Orthodox monasteries on Mount Athos, Mount Sinai and other holy places in the Near East. In his survey of Greek-Romanian relations prior to 1610, Nikos Panou pointed out that the early Greek influence on the Danubian Principalities was based on two main ideological prerequisites: the affirmation of the role played by Orthodoxy as a common religious identity; and a mutual recognition of Greek cultural

²⁸ On the establishment of the Metropolitanate of Moldavia, see Steven Runciman, "Manuel II and the See of Moldavia," in *Kathēgētria: Essays Presented to Joan Hussey for Her 80th Birthday* (Camberley: Porphyrogenitus, 1988), 515–520.

superiority, which accounted for Greek cultural patronage over the local church. Panou argued that the mutual assumption of Greek “superiority” would be responsible for both the great endurance of, as well as the recurrent crises in, Greek-Romanian interactions in the Principalities.

The Greek presence and, consequently, the Patriarchy’s influence over local Church affairs was much stronger in Wallachia than in Moldavia. Thus, from its establishment until 1754, the Wallachian Church was led by nine Greek Metropolitans, out of a total of thirty-four Metropolitans. Furthermore, during that period roughly one-third of the lower clergy was of Greek extraction.²⁹ A turning point in the history of the Wallachian Church’s close relations to the Patriarchate occurred at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the Wallachian prince Radu the Great invited the former Patriarch Nifon II (r. 1486–1488 and 1497–1498) to serve as archbishop of Wallachia. In that capacity, Nifon implemented major structural changes, revitalizing the Wallachian Church. Most importantly, he also initiated a complex religious program connecting the Ecumenical Patriarch with the ruling elites of the Principalities.³⁰ Although Nifon was deposed in 1505 (for entering into personal conflict with Prince Radu), his program was continued and amplified by the Hellenized prince Neagoe Basarab (r. 1512–1521),³¹ who in 1515 canonized Nifon, thus further consolidating and strengthening the symbolic bonds between Wallachia and the Orthodox Church.³²

A major pillar of the religious program connecting the Ecumenical Patriarch with the ruling elites of Wallachia was represented by the latter’s complex relations to the monasteries of Mount Athos and the Near East, involving church patronage, donations and the massive presence of Greek clerics in Wallachia and Moldavia and, occasionally, of Romanian clerics at Mount Athos. The emulation of the Byzantine practice of church patronage was first documented during the rule of the Wallachian prince Alexandru Nicolae (r. 1352–1364), who became founder and protector of the monastery of Kutlumuş. Wallachia’s relations to Mount Athos were greatly expanded during the rule of Neagoe Basarab, who made generous donations to Orthodox monasteries throughout Mount Athos and the

²⁹ Georgescu, *Bizanțul și instituțiile românești*, 92.

³⁰ On the symbolic dimensions and ideological background of Nifon’s vision and Wallachian “mission,” see Panou, “Greek-Romanian Symbiotic Patterns—II,” 63–64.

³¹ Radu-Stefan Ciobanu, *Neagoe Basarab (1512–1521)* (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1986).

³² Panou, “Greek-Romanian Symbiotic Patterns—II,” 83.

Near East.³³ The monasteries supported at this time by Wallachian princes, but also by powerful boyar families such as the Craiovești, included Saint Athanasius, Zographou, Xeropotamou, Philotheou, Saint Paul, Iveron, Dochiariou, Saint Panteleimon (Rossikon), Pantocrator, Vatopedi, Chilandar and Xenophon.³⁴

In contrast to Wallachia, the first Greek Metropolitan of Moldavia, Nikiforos of Peloponnese, was appointed as late as the mid-eighteenth century, at a time when Phanariot rule was well-consolidated. Moreover, his 1741 appointment by Phanariot Prince Mavrocordat sparked a revolt of the assembly of estates in 1752, which demanded the observance of the local mores (*obiceiul pământului*) according to which the leadership of the Church was to be entrusted to local hierarchs.³⁵ Also, the practice of dedicating monasteries, widely spread in Wallachia, was less common in Moldavia. Over time, however, this phenomenon was to have far-reaching social and political consequences in both Principalities, lasting until the monasteries' property was secularized in 1863.

Overall, the Greek clerics' penetration of the Orthodox Church in the Principalities strengthened Greek cultural influence and triggered major changes in the local church culture.³⁶ Upon the establishment of Moldavia and Wallachia, Byzantine ecclesiastic culture was transmitted in Old Slavonic, as the Principalities were part of the Byzantine-Slavonic cultural complex. Gradually, with the consolidation of Ottoman rule in the Balkans and the strengthening of Ottoman domination over the Principalities,

³³ For a general presentation of these relations, see Nicolae Iorga, *Fundațiunile Domnilor români în Epir* (Bucharest: Socec, 1914); and *Fundațiuni religioase ale Domnilor români în Orient* (Bucharest: Socec, 1914); Petre S. Năsturel, "Aperçu critique des rapports de la Valachie et du Mont Athos des Origines au début du XVI^e siècle," *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 2, nos. 1–2 (1964): 93–126; Petre S. Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos et les Roumains: recherches sur leurs relations du milieu du XIV^e siècle à 1654* (Rome: Pontificium institutum orientalium studiorum, 1986); Virgil Cândea, *Witnesses to the Romanian Presence in Mount Athos* (Bucharest: Editura Sport-Turism, 1979); and Andrei Pippidi, "Au debut des relations romano-athonites," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* 27, no. 3 (1988): 237–244.

³⁴ Năsturel, "Aperçu critique," 93–126.

³⁵ A.D. Xenopol, *Istoria românilor din Dacia Traiană* (Iași: Tipo-litografia H. Goldner, 1890), vol. 3, 450; Georgescu, *Bizanțul și instituțiile românești*, 93.

³⁶ It is significant in this respect that, although Old Slavonic continued to serve as the sacred language of the Church, Greek religious terms began to be frequently employed in the church and in the official court language. For a list of such works, including *mănăstire*, *mitropolit*, *călugăr*, *paraclis*, *liturghie*, *egumen* and *arhimandrit* and later *proegumen*, *monah* and *ieromonah*, see Constantin Erbiceanu, *Cronicarii greci care au scris despre Români în epoca fanariotă* (Bucharest: Editura Cărților Bisericești, 1888), xi–xii; Xenopol, *Istoria românilor din Dacia Traiană*, vol. 3, 452.

Moldavia and Wallachia entered the sphere of post-Byzantine Hellenic-Ottoman culture. The most important carriers of the Byzantine model became the Greek (or Hellenized) clerics emigrating to the Principalities. These clerics were part of a larger Hellenic-Byzantine cultural renaissance in the Ottoman Empire;³⁷ their activity in the Principalities was, however, invested with additional cultural-political roles. The massive presence of Byzantine or Hellenized clerics did not, in itself, generate the “Greek question.” Starting in the late sixteenth century, their presence acquired new connotations as a result of the post-Byzantine waves of *Ottoman* Greek elite migrants, who acted as mediators of Ottoman domination and were assigned an important role in the Ottoman tributary economy. In order to understand the important roles performed by the new migrants and their impact on local affairs, the following section explores the status of the two Principalities under Ottoman domination.

2. Ottoman “Protection” and Foreign Penetration in the Principalities: *Categories of Irregulars*

The explosive emergence of the “Greek question” in Moldavia and Wallachia can only be understood against the background of the two Principalities’ external status and the regime of Ottoman domination. From the fifteenth century until the achievement of state independence in 1878, Wallachia and Moldavia fully integrated into the system of *pax ottomana* as tributary Principalities.³⁸ Serving as “buffer territories” between the empire and European Christian states, the Principalities enjoyed a special legal and financial status, based on treaties signed between the sultan and native princes, called *ahdnames* or *sulhnames* (agreement-acts).³⁹ According to these treaties, Moldavia and Wallachia were considered by Ottoman ideology to be *ahd* or “tribute-paying states” and were placed in the *Dar al-’ahd* (“the House of Peace” or “The House of the Pact”), seen as an intermediary realm between the *Dar al-Islam* (the House of Islam) and

³⁷ Iorga, *Byzance après Byzance*, 12.

³⁸ See Hitchins, *The Romanians, 1774–1866*, 5–6; Mihai Maxim, “The Romanian Principalities and the Ottoman Empire,” in Dinu C. Giurescu and Stephen Fischer-Galați, eds., *Romania: A Historic Perspective* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1998), 112; Viorel Panaite, *The Ottoman Law of War and Peace: The Ottoman Empire and Tribute Payers* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2000), 5.

³⁹ Mihai Maxim, “The Romanian Principalities and the Ottoman Empire,” in Giurescu and Fischer-Galați, eds., *Romania: A Historic Perspective*, 112.

the *Dar al-harb* (the House of War).⁴⁰ This status was similar to that of other territories situated in the contact zone between the Muslim and the non-Muslim world, such as Ragusa/Dubrovnik in the Balkans, the Georgian kingdoms of Imereti and Kaheti in the Caucasus, and Tunis and Tangier in North Africa. Under the terms of the *ahdnames*, the Principalities paid to the High Porte an annual tribute called *haradj* and renounced attributes of formal sovereignty, such as the right to conduct an independent foreign policy. In exchange, they were entitled to Ottoman military protection in case of foreign aggression; they were allowed to choose their own native princes, provided that the princes were also approved by the sultan; and they enjoyed almost complete autonomy in their internal legislative, administrative and religious organization.⁴¹

The terms of the *ahdnames* were not fixed but changed as a result of the military balance and geopolitical context. By and large, starting in the sixteenth century, a slow but steady decline can be detected in the international status of Moldavia and Wallachia. In order to control the two Principalities more effectively, the Ottoman Empire compelled local princes to renounce their internal army and dismantle internal fortifications. In addition, the Porte occupied and fortified several areas on

⁴⁰ The nature of the legal relationship between the Principalities and the Ottoman Empire has occasioned considerable historiographical and political controversy. Traditional Romanian historiography described this relationship in terms of European *vassal-suzerain* feudal patterns. Pointing out that Moldavia and Wallachia were not conquered territories but autonomous provinces within the realm of the Ottoman Empire, and that the sultan was not their "sovereign" but "suzerain," they employed such formulas as "submitted," "dependent," "autonomous" or "vassal" states enjoying *de facto* a "restrictive and effective suzerainty." See, for example, Tahsin Gemil, *Românii și otomanii în secolele XIV–XVI* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1991), 17–46. Recent studies on Ottoman-Romanian relations pointed out that, although there is no direct contradiction or incompatibility between the actual meanings of these terms, European legal notions were in fact "inadequate to the Ottoman world." Taking into account Ottoman legal sources and the practice of customary laws, Viorel Panaite avoided using the label "vassal states" and the resulting anachronistic blending of European and Islamic legal notions, suggesting instead the terms "tributary-protected" states or provinces. From the point of view of the Islamic law of peace, the Principalities were part of the "well-protected dominions," within the realm of tributary protection. See Panaite, *The Ottoman Law of War and Peace*, 449, 472; and Ștefan Gorovei, "Moldova în 'Casa Păcii.' Pe marginea izvoarelor privind primul secol de relații moldo-turce," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie "A.D. Xenopol"* 17 (1980): 629–677; Maxim, "The Romanian Principalities," 111, 113; Mihai Maxim, "Cu privire la statutul de *ahd* al țărilor române față de Poartă: considerații pe marginea unor izvoare otomane" *Studii: Revista de istorie* 33, no. 6 (1986): 523–534; and Mihai Maxim, *Țările Române și Înalta Poartă. Cadrul Juridic al relațiilor româno-otomane în evul mediu* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1993), especially chapter 3.

⁴¹ See Mihai Maxim, "Din istoria relațiilor româno-otomane—'capitulațiile,'" *Analele de istorie* 28, no. 6 (1982): 45–48.

Wallachia and Moldavia's riparian territory on the Danube, known as *raya* (or occupied) territories, such as the Moldavian Black Sea city-ports of Chilia and Cetatea Albă (1488), the Wallachian territories of Turnu and Giurgiu (1429) and the Danubian harbors of Brăila (1538–1540), which served as commercial outlets and a territorial basis for military actions.

In the seventeenth century the administrative division separating Moldavia and Wallachia from the Ottoman Empire gradually became blurred as a result of the more direct involvement of Ottoman subjects in the administration of the Principalities. First, taking advantage of the deteriorating military power of the two countries—the army was practically reduced to a small princely guard—irregular Ottoman troops based in Bulgarian lands or in adjacent Ottoman *rayas*, as well as Tartar troops from southern Moldavia and Crimea, organized recurring raids into the territory of the Principalities, resulting in looting and destruction and the enslavement of the inhabitants. The Ottomans also gradually infiltrated into the *rayas'* neighboring areas, usurping new territories or appropriating land through illegal occupation or enclosure. These abuses provoked a reaction by the local princes, who chased brigands, forced Muslims to return appropriated lands and to sell illegally purchased plots, and attempted to regulate Ottoman subjects' access to the Principalities.

In addition, the strengthening of Ottoman domination generated several irregular categories of residents, among which the most important were 1) the Ottoman merchants; and 2) Ottoman Greeks employed in the state apparatus of the Principalities. First, Ottoman merchants formed a privileged category of subjects in the territory of the Principalities. Under the framework of Ottoman domination, the Principalities were obliged to supply food to Constantinople at preferential prices. To exercise this right, numerous Ottoman merchants flooded the Principalities. They settled in major cities such as Iași, Dorohoi, Botoșani, Roman, Huși, Bârlad, Bucharest, Craiova and Argeș and built networks of requisition at preferential prices, often using coercion. Gradually, Ottoman merchants acquired a privileged position in the Principalities.⁴² They took advantage of the massive increase in the financial obligations of the Principalities to the Porte, the Ottoman commercial monopoly over the Principalities until 1826/1829, and the huge debts accumulated by princes in Constantinople for

⁴² According to the Ottoman chronicler Mustafa Naima, in 1593–1594, there were about 4,000 “Janissaries and rich creditors.” See Mustafa A. Mehmet, *Cronici turcești privind Țările Române. Extrase*, vol. 3, *Sfârșitul sec. XVI–începutul sec. XIX* (Bucharest, 1980), 8.

covering their installment fees—which made them dependent on Ottoman creditors. Moreover, unlike regular merchants, Ottoman negotiators refused to organize themselves into a guild, thus making it difficult for local authorities in the Principalities to control their activities. In numerous instances, local princes attempted to eliminate these abuses, limiting the number of Ottoman merchants in the Principalities, forcing them to live in certain areas, requiring them to pay in cash for their merchandise, and holding them collectively responsible for their trading acts. These abuses were ameliorated with a partial lifting of the Ottoman monopoly over the Principalities in 1826, and ceased after its abolition by the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829.

The second important category of irregular residents was the Ottoman Greeks, whose number grew steadily at this time, stimulated by the consolidation of Ottoman rule in the Balkans, which facilitated a process of intra-regional migration. Initially, the new Greek migrants originated mostly from Epirus,⁴³ Macedonia, Chios and the Ionic Islands; they were mostly merchants or creditors of the prince and settled predominantly in Wallachia, and only to a lesser degree in Moldavia. In the second half of the sixteenth century, the situation changed. Greek migrants began to be recruited from more prominent Istanbul-based elite power networks. Furthermore, the new Greek migrants managed to slowly penetrate the political sphere in the Principalities, which was traditionally a monopoly of the local *boyars*. Under Mircea Ciobanul (r. 1545–1552; 1553–1554; 1558–1559) and Petru cel Tânăr (Peter the Younger) (r. 1559–1568), for example, the Ottoman Greeks occupied important high positions in the princely *divan* of Wallachia and accumulated vast landed estates through marriage to local noble women or donations (*daniu*) by the prince. Among them, the most important were Iane Cantacuzino, former Ottoman dignitary in Constantinople and the uncle of Prince Mihai Viteazul (Michael the Brave) (r. 1593–1601), who became *mare ban* of Craiova; Oxtie of Pogoniani, *mare agă* (r. 1567–1568) under Petru cel Tânăr (r. 1559–1568); and Mihalcea Caragea (Karadja) from Chios, who became *mare ban* under Petru Cercel (r. 1583–1585).⁴⁴ These Greek migrants of Istanbul

⁴³ Ariadna Camarino-Cioran, *L'Épire et les Pays roumains* (Ioannina: Association d'Etudes Epirotes, 1984).

⁴⁴ See Claudiu Neagoe, "Grecii în Țara Românească în a doua jumătate a veacului al XVI-lea," *Analele Cercului de Istorie "Gheorghe I. Brătianu" din Câmpulung Muscel* 1–2 (1998–1999), 6; A. Sacerdoțeanu, "Pomelnicul Mănăstirii Argeșului," *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 83 (1965) 3–4, 313; *DIR. B, Țara Românească, veacul XVI*, vol. 3, 253–254; Nicolae

origin—referred to by local Wallachian sources as *greci țarigrădeni*⁴⁵—were perceived as agents of the regime of Ottoman exploitation, and as such they were at the receiving end of many local grievances, becoming a constant target of popular riots and the first victims of most anti-Ottoman military campaigns.

3. *Princely Autocracy vs. a Nobiliary State: Competing Imperial Networks in the Principalities*

To understand the outbreak of the “Greek question” in the Principalities, a short overview is in order at this point about the internal organization of the two Principalities in the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century. At the top of the sociopolitical pyramid of power of the Principalities was the prince. He was known as *voievod*, a title originating from the Slavic word *voievoda*, and *domn*, a term derived from the Latin *dominus* (also called *hospodar* in international treaties in the eighteenth century).⁴⁶ The prince was assisted by a consultative council composed of leading aristocrats, called *Sfatul Domnesc* or *divan*, and by a body of court servants and representatives at the local level.⁴⁷ The *domn* concentrated in his hands full autocratic powers; he was a legislator, military commander, supreme judge and nominal owner of the country’s land (*jus eminens*).⁴⁸ He had the right to change or issue new laws, called *hrisoave* or *așezăminte*; he decided punishments (including capital ones) and granted titles of nobility and state dignities, landed estates, fiscal privileges, and Gypsy slaves. He also had the right to establish new towns and boroughs and to settle foreign colonists in the country.⁴⁹

Stoicescu, *Dicționar al marilor dregători din Țara Românească și Moldova, sec. XIV–XVII* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică Română, 1971), 77.

⁴⁵ A. Sacerdoțeanu, “Pomelnicul Mănăstirii Argeșului,” 313, cited in Neagoe, *Dregatori*, 216. In the Old Romanian language, Istanbul was called Țarigrad or “the City of the Czars,” just as in Old Slavonic.

⁴⁶ Neagu Djuvara, *Între Orient și Occident: Țările române la începutul epocii moderne*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2002), 56–58.

⁴⁷ On the composition and function of the princely council, see Nicolae Stoicescu, *Sfatul domnesc și marii dregători din Țara Românească și Moldova (sec. XIV–XVII)* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1968). For a reference work on medieval institutions in the Principalities, see Ovid Sachelarie and Nicolae Stoicescu, eds., *Instituii feudale din țările române: dicționar* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1968).

⁴⁸ Pippidi, “Domnia,” *Tradiția politică*, 17–51.

⁴⁹ For a useful technical description of the immunities enjoyed by the Church and the prince’s followers in the two Principalities, see Vasile Costăchel, *Les immunités dans les*

Given the charismatic nature of his rule, the prince was also the head of the church, officiating certain religious ceremonies and confirming the election of Orthodox metropolitans and bishops in each principality. As in Western feudalism, the legal foundation of this autocratic regime in the Principalities was not equality before the law, but personal dependence on the prince, which carried with it exceptions and privileges. By granting immunities and privileges to the church and lay followers, the *domn* could build political support for his rule, by relying on their loyalty and military assistance.

The autocratic and cosmopolitan political order in the Principalities was challenged in the seventeenth century when the local nobility attempted to limit the power of the prince and to replace his autocracy with a regime of nobility estates resembling the Hungarian and Polish patterns. The origins of the nobility in the Principalities, called *boieri*, are a matter of considerable scholarly controversy. However, most authors agree that nobility status had a dual foundation: possession of large estates and the appointment to rank by a prince. Unlike Western and Central Europe, where the rights of the nobility were written down in the Magna Carta, in Moldavia and Wallachia they were consecrated by tradition and regular confirmations by princely legal acts called *hrisoave*.

In both Principalities, there were nobility assemblies, documented in the Principalities starting in the fifteenth century, and initially called *soim* or *parlament*.⁵⁰ These assemblies were composed of all privileged groups, such as the nobility, court dignitaries, the army and the clergy, while the cities were only weakly and irregularly represented.⁵¹ Assemblies were convoked only in exceptional situations, such as the election of new princes, or during crises, when they helped princes reach major decisions on foreign or domestic policy. These assemblies were better developed in Moldavia, under Polish influence (they were engaged in intensive activity in the fifteenth century, as evinced by the assemblies in 1441, 1448, 1456, 1457 and 1504); in Wallachia, they developed especially between 1596 and

Principautés roumaines aux XIV^{ème} et XV^{ème} siècles (Bucharest: Institute d'Historie Universelle "Nicolae Iorga," 1947).

⁵⁰ On the composition and function of the estates assemblies, see Gheorghe Brătianu, *Sfatul domnesc și adunarea stărilor în Principatele Române* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1995); and Petre P. Panaitescu, "Marea adunare a țării, instituție a orînduirii feudale în țările române," *Studii: Revista de istorie* 10, no. 3 (1957): 153–165.

⁵¹ The participation of merchants in the extraordinary assembly was first documented in 1538 in Moldavia. See Panaitescu, "Marea adunare a țării," 159.

1746, mostly in relation to the anti-Greek campaign of the local aristocracy and the lower classes.⁵²

Gradually, in the sixteenth century, taking advantage of the weakening of central power and of its own transformation into a hereditary and cohesive social and political force, the nobility transformed the extraordinary assembly into a permanent legislative forum, invested with effective control over the principedom. In return, the prince's strategy was to weaken the power and cohesion of the boyars by relying heavily on foreign collaborators who were granted access to nobility and provided an ad-hoc basis for the new regime, replacing the local nobles. These new collaborators were initially Istanbul-based creditors of the two princes, who came to the Principalities as part of their entourage and gradually assumed positions of power in the state apparatus. Thus, while in the second half of the sixteenth century there were only ten Greek great boyars in the Wallachian princely council and seven in the Moldavian one, in the next century their number increased to forty-two and fifty, respectively.⁵³

The Greek elite migration happened during a gradual transformation of the nobility from *landowners* to *officeholders*, a change also reflected in the transformation of the princely council from a feudal institution in the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries to an important and lucrative body of state functionaries in the seventeenth century.⁵⁴ Historians have tried to explain this structural change in a number of ways. A.D. Xenopol attributes the change in the structure of the nobility to the exhaustion of the princely feudal domain: unable to endow his followers with new landed estates, the prince granted boyars lucrative offices, thus gradually creating an aristocracy of office to rival the landed aristocracy.⁵⁵ More recently, Andrei Pippidi attributed the changes in the structure of the boyar class in the Principalities to the loss of the chivalry culture that used to animate the Principalities in the era of military resistance against the Ottomans from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. With submission to the Ottomans, military ranks and military services became secondary in importance to the more lucrative administrative or tax-levying offices.⁵⁶

⁵² Georgescu, *Bizanțul*, 50, 51.

⁵³ Pippidi, *Tradiția politică*, 113. He regards this figure as minimal, since it does not contain Albanian and Italian Ottomans, who were *de facto* assimilated to the Greek clientele in the Principalities.

⁵⁴ See Stoicescu, *Sfatul domnesc și marii dregători din Țara Românească și Moldova (sec. XIV–XVII)*.

⁵⁵ Xenopol, *Istoria românilor din Dacia Traiană*, vol. 3.

⁵⁶ Pippidi, *Tradiția politică*.

The changes in the nature of the nobility cannot be understood without taking into account the full social impact of Ottoman domination: high taxation led to a crisis in the agricultural economy of the Principalities and the resulting pauperization of many boyars. These changes led to a polarization of the boyar class between *mazili* (former dignitaries) and boyars with dignities. Possession of landed estates, in itself, ceased to be a mark of nobility and a source of social and political power, as there were powerless landed boyars without offices and powerful officeholders without estates. In this context, the Ottoman Greeks' access to nobility status and their monopolization of major and highly lucrative dignities triggered a strong reaction among native boyars, as dignities were sources of financial revenues and influence. They demanded the removal of immigrants from office, arguing that, unlike previous Christian noble immigrants from the Balkans, the new Greek immigrants were motivated by commercial interests only and showed no interest in settling in the Principalities and in adopting local traditions.

4. *The "Greek Question" in the Seventeenth Century: The "Levantine" Challenge, 1601–1711/1716*

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the great boyars succeeded in establishing an oligarchic political rule.⁵⁷ The new political order was characterized, however, by great political instability generated by the acute rivalry among competing boyar factions. One faction was grouped around the Moldavian Movilești—the first local boyar family that managed

⁵⁷ The existence of a genuine "nobiliary" or "aristocratic-dominated political regime" (*regim boieresc*) in the Principalities between 1601 and 1711/1716 has been a matter of debate in Romanian historiography. While the massive 1964 synthesis titled *Istoria Românilor* (History of Romania) published by the Romanian Academy of Sciences argued for the existence of a full-fledged nobiliary political regime (*regim boieresc*), recent works argue for the existence of an oligarchic political regime, marked by the confrontation between the prince and the boyar class but also between rival factions of the boyar class. While the tendency to establish a regime of estates was evident both in practice and in programmatic manifestos (see below), the irregular convocation of the assemblies of estates, the lack of structure and rules of representation in the assembly and the ad-hoc procedures, such as votes by acclamation and the discretionary powers of the prince during the proceedings of the assembly, is markedly different from a fully fledged regime of estates similar to those existing in Poland or Hungary. For a pioneering debate, see "Problema organizării statale ca 'regim boieresc' în Țara Românească și Moldova," *Revista de istorie* 32, no. 5 (1979): 941–956, with contributions by Valentin Al. Georgescu, Andrei Pippidi, Florin Constantiniu, Mihai Maxim, Liviu Marcu, Ion Matei and others.

to break the monopoly held by the old Mușatini and Basarab dynasties⁵⁸ over the throne of the Principalities—who favored close political and military collaboration with the Kingdom of Poland. An opposing faction was led by princes named by the Porte, who favored collaboration and integration with the Porte. The cause of the Movilești was supported by a large social coalition made up of upper but also lower boyars as well as by city-dwellers. Their pro-Ottoman rivals relied on a pro-Ottoman faction of the upper boyars but also, increasingly, on the financial and political support of the Ottoman Greeks. In Wallachia, powerful boyar families gravitated politically toward the principality of Transylvania, which provided them with military assistance but also with an aristocratic political model. As in Moldavia, their actions were countered by pro-Ottoman upper boyar factions. During the time, other political combinations emerged in both Principalities, marked by the appearance of pro-Russian or pro-Habsburg factions, supported by princely autocratic programs, best epitomized by the Moldavian Prince Dimitrie Cantemir (r. 1693, 1710–1711)⁵⁹ and the Wallachian Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu (r. 1688–1714), respectively. These parties were all animated by different visions of the internal organization and external status of the two Principalities, as outlined in various internal documents or international treaties. The Wallachian great boyars favored a nobiliary regime of estates modeled on the Hungarian example, accompanied by their integration and membership into the Transylvanian diet.⁶⁰ The Moldavian pro-Polish party argued for the establishment of a regime of estates modeled on the Polish example, accompanied by their integration into the Polish diet.⁶¹ Later, Phanariot princes favored

⁵⁸ *Istoria Românilor* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1964), vol. 3, 128.

⁵⁹ For the program of the pro-Russian autocratic party, see the 1711 treaty signed between Dimitrie Cantemir and Peter the Great.

⁶⁰ For programmatic manifestos of the Wallachian Transylvanian boyar party, see the treaty signed by Sigismund Báthory and a delegation of great Wallachian boyars at Alba Iulia on May 20, 1595, in Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, vol. 3, part 1, 210–213, reprinted in *Mihai Viteazul în conștiința europeană* (5 vols.), ed. Ion Ardeleanu, vol. 1, *Vasile Arimia and Georghe Bondoc* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1982), 87–99.

⁶¹ For the Moldavian Polish party, see “Jalba și cererile domnilor boieri moldoveni, în numele întregii țări, către prealuminatul și nebiruitul, maiestatea sa regele Poloniei și întregii republice, date la Zolkiev, anul 1684, luna iulie, ziua 25,” in Miron Costin, *Opere*, ed. P.P. Panaitescu (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură, 1956), 333, and Hurmuzachi, *Documente, Supliment*, vol. 3, part 3, 151–153. Attributed primarily to Miron Costin, this petition demands from the king of Poland the protection of Moldavia against the Ottoman yoke, and the incorporation of the Moldavian boyars as full members in the Polish *szlachta*; in case Moldavia was lost to the Ottomans, the Moldavian boyars asked for their right to emigrate to the Kingdom of Poland as members of the *szlachta*.

an autocratic political system as part of the Ottoman system of domination over the Principalities. The complex confrontation among these rival political factions resulted in constant political turmoil, aggravated by recurring military interventions from Transylvania, the Kingdom of Poland, the Ottoman Empire and later Russia. The main dimension of political struggle during the seventeenth century was control over the office of the principedom, the axis of power that could decide the nature of the domestic political regime.

It was in this context of political rivalry and sociopolitical upheaval that the "Greek question" emerged in the two Principalities. A short overview of the power struggles that took place in the first third of the seventeenth century illustrates the endemic instability and explosive social situation of the Principalities, as well as the strong political impact of the Ottoman Greek elite immigration on the local political situation.

In Wallachia the "Greek question" erupted during the reign of Radu Mihnea, who acceded for the first time to the throne in September 1601, replacing the Polish vassal Simion Movilă. His rule signaled the Principalities' full return to Ottoman suzerainty. Born in Istanbul as an illegitimate son of Mihnea Turcitul, Radu Mihnea was raised in Koper (Capodistria) and educated at the Monastery of Iveron on Mount Athos. He came to the Principalities accompanied by numerous Ottoman Greeks whom he awarded key positions in the state apparatus, such as the treasury (*visteria*) or the office of the *mare ban* of Craiova (granted to Ianache Catargiu).⁶² In order to consolidate his rule, Radu Mihnea excluded from office the upper boyar families who supported Michael the Brave's anti-Ottoman campaigns, the Buzești and the Rudești families, relying instead on a pro-Ottoman boyar faction as well as on Ottoman Greek collaborators, such as those mentioned above. The local boyars were quick to react to this unprecedented breach of their political monopoly: in 1611, several great boyars led by Bărcan of Merișani plotted to assassinate Radu Mihnea and replace him with their own candidate. The plot was discovered by Mihnea, who decapitated nine great boyars and confiscated their wealth.⁶³

In 1616 the Porte transferred Radu Mihnea to Moldavia and imposed Alexandru Iliaș as prince of Wallachia (r. September 1616–May 1618). The

⁶² Xenopol, *Istoria românilor din Dacia Traiană*, vol. 3, 448. For a contemporary source dated November 23, 1611, see Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, vol. 4, 456, also cited by Xenopol.

⁶³ For an account of this episode, see *Istoria Țării Românești 1290–1690. Letopiseșul Cantacuzinesc*, 90 (see also above, notes 1–2). On the life of Bărcan of Merișani, see Stoicescu, *Dicționar al marilor dregători*, 32–33.

son of the former prince Alexandru Lăpușneanu, who lived in Istanbul for many years, Iliș came to the Principalities along with a large Greek entourage. A contemporary chronicle attributed to Nicolae Muște pointed out that the Istanbul-based prince “came with all his house, foreign Greek people, all lacking in pride.”⁶⁴ Another local chronicle said of the prince: “The language [of the country] he could not speak, but communicated only with the help of a translator.” The local boyars, led by *paharnicul* Lupu Mehedințeanu, revolted against Iliș and plotted his assassination, on the grounds that they “were overwhelmed by the great number of Greeks and offended by their arrogance.” Iliș discovered the plot, but his rival boyars managed to take refuge in Transylvania and, with the help of the Transylvanian prince Gabriel Bethlen, invaded Wallachia and imposed Gavril Movilă to the throne. Upon their return, the boyars engaged in violent acts meant to scare away the Greeks. Acts of plunder were also waged against the Greek merchants in Wallachia. To gather funds to pay the Transylvanian troops who assisted them in dethroning Iliș, Lupu sent Captain Buzdugan, one of the military leaders of the anti-Greek revolt, to storm the country hunting Greek merchants and confiscating their wealth. These actions found wide support among the peasantry, who directed against the Greeks the resentments caused by the onerous Ottoman fiscal regime. Chronicler Simon Massa pointed out that the Greeks were hated by the poor strata of society (*plebeea săracă*) because “they were robbed by the Greeks through countless taxes.”⁶⁵ In contrast to this view, a Greek chronicle argued that Lupu Mehedințeanu was supported by “all the damned man-eaters (*mâncătorii de oameni*)”⁶⁶ but acknowledged that “all loved him, all accepted his authority.”⁶⁷ Confirmed by the Ottomans, the new prince Gavril Movilă (r. 1618–1620) relied for his power on the leaders of the anti-Greek revolt, naming Lupu Mehedințeanu *mare spătar*. Soon, Lupu and Buzdugan were, nevertheless, captured and impaled by the Ottomans.⁶⁸

In Moldavia, from 1600 to 1611, the Movilești managed to dominate the new oligarchic regime with the support of Poland, which acted as an

⁶⁴ *Letopisețul Moldovei*, attributed to Nicolae Muște, in Kogălniceanu, *Cronicele României sau Letopisețele*, 6.

⁶⁵ Simon Massa, “Chronik,” in *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Brasso*, vol. 5, 371, cited in *Istoria Românilor*, 144.

⁶⁶ *Istoria Românilor*, 144.

⁶⁷ Alexandru Papiu Ilarian, *Tesauru de monumente istorice*, vol. 1, 349, cited in *Istoria Românilor*, 144.

⁶⁸ *Istoria Românilor*, 139.

external patron of the new order.⁶⁹ In 1611, however, the Porte managed to replace the Moldavian prince Constantin Movilă with Ștefan Tomșa (r. 1611–1615), thus bringing Moldavia back under its suzerainty. The great Moldavian boyars, in alliance with city-dwellers, resisted the change but were defeated by Tomșa, who then started a campaign of harsh repression, slaughtering many rival great boyars and confiscating their estates.⁷⁰

The temporary fall of the Movilești set off a period of military conflict between Poland and the Ottoman Empire for control of the two Principalities (1611–1617 and again 1620–1621). Following their defeat by the pro-Ottoman party, the Movilești had their rule in Moldavia interrupted by princes named at the recommendation of the pro-Ottoman boyar party: Ștefan IX Tomșa (r. 1611–1615; 1621–1623), Radu Mihnea (r. 1616–1619 and 1623–1626) and Alexandru Iliaș (r. 1620–1621; 1631–1633). The Movilești returned to rule only briefly in 1615, when a new revolt of the great boyars against Tomșa, supported by Poland, succeeded in temporarily bringing Alexandru Movilă (r. 1615–1616) to the throne. However, as already mentioned, he was soon removed by the Ottomans and replaced with Radu Mihnea (r. 1616–1619). In 1620 the great boyars and the city dwellers revolted yet again against the prince named by the Porte, killing Ottoman merchants on the streets of Iași, as symbols and agents of Ottoman rule. In 1621, however, Poland was decisively defeated by the Ottomans and forced to renounce its influence in Moldavia.

The Ottoman victory ushered in a period of an Ottoman-supported nobility regime (r. 1621–1629) led by princes loyal to the Porte, such as Alexandru Iliaș, who, after being removed from the Wallachian throne, was twice appointed ruler of Moldavia (September 1620 to October 1621 and December 1631 to April 1633). The Movilești returned again to rule through Miron Barnovschi-Movilă (r. 1626–1629 and April–July 1633), and Moise Movilă (r. 1630–1631 and 1633–1634). In 1629 Barnovschi withdrew from power due to the untenable Ottoman fiscal pressure. This opened a new period of instability and political confrontation between Poland and its local supporters, the Movilești and Barnovschi on the one side, and the Ottoman Empire and the supporters of Radu Mihnea on the other.

Ottoman Greeks were at the very center of these conflicts. Thus, as in his first rule in Wallachia, in Moldavia Prince Alexandru Iliaș surrounded himself with Ottoman Greeks, the most influential of whom was Constan-

⁶⁹ *Istoria Românilor*, vol. 3, 128.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 129.

tin Batiste Veveli from Crete (om de neamul sau criteană). In *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei*, covering events from 1594 to 1660, Miron Costin (1633–1691), a representative of the great boyars, accused the prince of indolence, stating, “The boyars tried to solve the country’s problems as best they could, while the prince instead spent time with Batiste Veveli.”⁷¹ In April 1633 the local boyars learned that, at Veveli’s instigation, the prince planned to execute his opponents. Led by *vornicul* Vasile Lupu, the local boyars revolted. The rebels mobilized the masses as well as the lower boyars, the city-dwellers and the peasantry, who could be easily stirred up against the Greeks: “they called upon the country which, fraught under heavy burdens and wrongdoing, rose up, and not only the court but the peasantry as well.”⁷² Urged to drive the Greeks out, Alexandru Iliș refused. He also threatened the mob, warning, “If they revolt against the Greeks, they revolt against me.”⁷³ The revolt soon degenerated into violence against the Greeks; the uncontrollable crowds even turned against Vasile Lupu due to his mixed Greek and Albanian origins.⁷⁴ Fearing for his life, Alexandru Iliș left the capital but was attacked by angry crowds near the Balica Monastery. To escape alive, he was forced to surrender Batiste Veveli, his main protégé, who was lynched by the angry mob: “And so, without mercy, he was chopped into pieces alive, with axes,” reported Miron Costin, who condemned, with aristocratic contempt, the crowd’s cruelty. Victorious, the great boyars elected the former Miron Barnovschi to the throne. Barnovschi traveled to Constantinople for investiture but was executed by the sultan for treason on July 2, 1633.

The intense competition over the office of the princedom in the Principalities gradually affected the nature of the institution. Traditionally, the princedom had an elective-hereditary character, in that princes were elected by the assembly of estates or the *divan* from among the male offspring of the Mușatin and Basarab dynasties or, after their extinction, among the legitimate or illegitimate descendants of former princes. In the seventeenth century the Porte gradually altered this tradition in several ways. First, to curtail the anti-Ottoman tendencies of the upper boyars, following Barnovschi’s defection in 1633, the Porte decided to strip the local boyars of the right to elect the prince. Instead, princes were appointed

⁷¹ Miron Costin, “Letopisețul Țării Moldovei (de la Aron Vodă încoace),” in *Viața Lumii* (Chișinău: Litera, 1998), 95.

⁷² Costin, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei*, 96.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.: “Even Vasile Vornicul was attacked, hit on his head with a bone because he is of Greek origin, and Vasile Vornicul suffered from that wound for a long time.”

from among local or external aspirants to the throne (many of whom claimed to be legitimate or illegitimate offspring of previous princes), raised and groomed in Istanbul and intimately linked with Ottoman interest groups. Moreover, starting in 1669, in order to establish firmer control over the right to office, the Porte decided to select the princes not exclusively from the scions of princely families but also from other categories of loyal Istanbul-based candidates to the throne, including Greek Ottoman families. Ultimately, following the defection of the Moldavian Prince Dimitrie Cantemir (r. 1710–1711) and the alleged treason of Constantin Brâncoveanu (r. 1688–1714), at the beginning of the eighteenth century the Porte decided to entrust the principedom solely to the Greek families living in the district of Phanar in Constantinople, who were expected to be more responsive to the Porte's financial and geopolitical interests.

These changes altered the nature of the principedom, as expressed in the forms of legitimacy claimed by the prince, the rites and rituals associated with the coronation ceremony and the political language employed in official documents. In his work *Descriptio Moldaviae*, Dimitrie Cantemir testifies to the fact that, prior to Ottoman domination, the princely coronation ceremony was centered on the local church and nobility, symbolizing a pact of submission of the local community to the new autocratic prince. With the strengthening of Ottoman domination, however, the main ceremony of investiture moved from the country's capital to Istanbul and revolved around the Ottoman main pillars of power, namely the sultan, the Ottoman *divan*, the grand vizier, and the Orthodox Patriarch, in a complex ceremony.⁷⁵ The same was true for the dismissal of the prince from office (*mazilirea*): as Cantemir pointed out, a small unarmed delegation of the sultan could easily penetrate the capital and depose the *domn* by reading the Sultan's *ferman*, who then had to travel to Istanbul, clear his name and, if he managed to survive the punishment, reside there to await a new investiture.⁷⁶

This change of emphasis was also reflected in the political language employed by princes in official documents; the sultan was invoked as the main source of legitimization, since he held the power to invest, supervise and depose the *domn*.⁷⁷ In practice, the prince's status depended most often on the Ottoman grand vizier, with whom the princes of the

⁷⁵ Cantemir, *Descrierea Moldovei*, 101–128.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 134–146.

⁷⁷ On this point, see Radu G. Păun, "La circulation des pouvoirs dans les Pays Roumains au XVII^e siècle. Repères pour un modèle théorique," *New Europe College Yearbook*, (1998–1999), 263–310.

two Principalities were in regular contact, and most importantly, on the sizable Greek entourage who acted as mediators between the princes of Moldavia and Wallachia and the sultan's palace, until they managed to monopolize the office for themselves.

5. *From Street Violence to Historiographical Confrontations:
Anti-Greek Discourses in the Principalities*

The conflict between the two competing interest groups described above, the local versus the Ottoman Greek networks, was manifested in various ways. In addition to diplomatic and military or street confrontations, the two parties promoted competing discourses on controversial events, which developed into rival historiographical perspectives. Thus, if until the sixteenth century, chronicle-writing in the Principalities was conducted mainly in monasteries and served primarily official or ecclesiastic purposes, in the seventeenth century chronicles became a major political weapon in the local power struggle, expressing political programs of change and legitimizing the actions of one side while stigmatizing the opponents, often in religious and moral tones. Due to this change, chronicles were no longer written in Slavonic, but in Romanian or Polish, in order to reach a wider local or international audience. Moreover, these chronicles were not ordered solely by the prince, but also by great boyar families, who provided their own version of key events. This practice resulted in a very dense historiographic landscape, marked by polemical confrontations among competing yet intertwined discourses about the past. Gradually, one can detect the emergence of a coherent anti-Greek discourse in the historiography of the Principalities, supported by a negative stereotype of the character of the Greeks. The portrait of the Greek is often unfavorably contrasted with the tolerant nature of the local inhabitants, or with the more virtuous image of the Poles (leșii), as the Moldavians' allies. Since an exhaustive treatment of these chronicles, spanning two centuries, is beyond the confines of this chapter, in what follows I focus on a few representative samples of the historiographical conflict between the local and the Ottoman Greek networks of power, with a focus on patterns of reactions and counter-reactions in their dialogue.

The first Greek perspective on the dramatic events connected to the anti-Greek plot of the upper boyars in Wallachia, led by Bărcan, is provided by Matthew of Myra (1550–1624). Born in Epirus, Matthew entered the service of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul and traveled widely

in the Balkans and Russia. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, he settled in Wallachia, where he was appointed abbot of the Dealu Monastery in Târgoviște, a position he kept until his death.⁷⁸ In his verse chronicle *History of Wallachia*, Matthew provided a contemporary account of the dramatic conflict between the Greek community and the local Wallachian boyars. Himself a Greek migrant, Matthew was placed in a difficult position, in between the Istanbul Greek migrants and the local rival boyar faction. On the one hand, Matthew assumed a Greek identity,⁷⁹ which prompted him to condemn unambiguously the violent anti-Greek riots:

They suddenly wanted to kill Prince Radu, / planning to appoint Michael, the treasurer, to the throne, / and then haste straight to the merchants, / and slaughter them, and confiscate their merchandise. / They intended to exterminate the Greek community, / so that all Greeks living in their land would vanish, / nobles and subordinates and the poor alike, / the very people who provide their households with wares and goods.⁸⁰

The defeat of the plot and the capital punishment inflicted on the rebels was a confirmation of the rightfulness of the Greek cause, but it was also a proof of God's divine protection over the Greeks:

But God did not want what they wanted, / and He judged them according to their crime: / thus, He decided for them / that, as always, malevolent people should meet ghastly deaths; / for when Prince Radu found out about the plot, / he had their heads cut off without any delay.⁸¹

For Matthew, the fatal outcome of the plot was a warning to all rebels: "Everybody should learn never to mean harm / against his ruler, but only to serve him / with loyalty, respect and trust, / if he wants his head to stay on his shoulders." The anti-Greek plot was not only lawless but also went against the Wallachians' best interest: Matthew attributes to the Greek merchants an important societal role, portraying them as indispensable to

⁷⁸ On Matthew's life, see Ariadna Camariano-Cioran, *L'Épire et les Pays Roumains*, 163–168; Alfred Vincent, "Byzantium Regained? The History, Advice and Lament by Matthew of Myra," *Thesaurismata* 28 (1998), 282–285; and Panou, "Greek-Romanian Symbiotic Patterns—I," 75–90.

⁷⁹ In his extended commentaries on Matthew's chronicle, Panou argues that Matthew's term *genos romaion* "is referring to a Greek ethnic group, that is, to people of a distinct Greek origin." I follow here Panou's translation of *genos* as the "Greek community." See Panou, "Greek-Romanian Symbiotic Patterns—I," 80.

⁸⁰ Emile Legrand, ed., *Bibliothèque grecque vulgaire*, vol. 2 (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1881), 245 (lines 393–406), cited in Panou, "Greek-Romanian Symbiotic Patterns," 78, note 10.

⁸¹ Legrand, *Bibliothèque grecque vulgaire*, vol. 2, 245 (lines 393–406), cited in Panou, "Greek-Romanian Symbiotic Patterns," 78, note 10.

local affairs. Most importantly, however, he argues that the Greeks were central to the preservation of the true Orthodox religion leading to universal salvation:

people should also realize that they must not nourish bad thoughts against Christian Greeks / but respect them and love them, / *since they are a holy, blessed people*, / a people most Christian in its Orthodoxy, and widely honored; / for it is Greeks who have lavishly bestowed wisdom upon the world, / and letters and the art of war and theology; / it was they who first embraced the Christian faith, / and disseminated it, making Christians out of everyone; / they have converted you to Orthodoxy: / wouldn't it be a sin for you to slay them now?⁸²

It is important to note, however, that, as a naturalized inhabitant of Wallachia, Matthew distanced himself from the more recent temporary migrants from Istanbul who populated the administration of Wallachia, recommending they exercise moderation and caution in dealing with the local population and local aristocracy and threatening them with divine punishment:

But you too, Greek lords! You should also be careful, / both the courtiers among you, and those who deal in business; / be on guard and don't succumb to injustice: / you should not allow your greed to burden the people of Wallachia, / nor should you be excessively demanding upon the poor, / for there is a God in heaven and He is watching from above; / [...] / It seems to me that you behave like tyrants to the poor Wallachians, / and your greed has turned them into Greek-haters, / to the extent that they abhor even the mere sight of you; / you look down on them as if they were dogs, / and, after all, if they weren't mistreated they wouldn't be complaining. / But it does seem that they have good reasons to whine. / Stop, then, and refrain from injustice, / or God will inflict an eternal punishment upon you. /

For Matthew, Greek-Romanian fraternal relations were thus evidently based on the assumption of Greek superiority: "These poor devils provide for us, and they take good care of us, / and, willy-nilly, they even call us 'masters,' / so we must feel for them and love them; / and we must honor them, for they are our brothers."

On the other side, there gradually emerged an anti-Greek discourse promoted by the local rivals of the Ottoman Constantinople-based network of power in the Principalities. Resentments against the Ottoman Greeks were especially expressed in the historiographical discourse of the

⁸² Legrand, *Bibliothèque grecque vulgaire*, vol. 2, 245–246 (lines 409–422), cited in Panou, "Greek-Romanian Symbiotic Patterns," 81 (emphasis added).

Moldavian great boyars, represented mainly by Grigore Ureche (1590–1647), Miron Costin (1633–1691) and his son, Nicolae Costin (1660–1712), and Ion Neculce (1672–1745). Associated with the “Polish party” and of Polish scholarly inspiration (both Ureche and Costin were educated in Poland), this discourse was virulently anti-Greek.⁸³

A representative voice of the local boyars’ anti-Greek orientation was the Moldavian upper boyar and chronicler Ion Neculce. In his work titled *Letopiseșul Țării Moldovei* (The Chronicles of the Land of Moldavia), covering events from 1661 to 1743, Neculce expressed a whole range of stereotypes against the Greeks,⁸⁴ accusing them of greed, venality and immorality. He also voiced the exasperation of the great boyars who could not prevail against the Greeks:

And under Alexandru Iliș, Batiste and other [Greeks] suffered, and also under other princes. And in Wallachia several times the Greeks suffered humiliation and depravation. But the two countries could not cleanse themselves of them [the Greeks]. This is what I think with my humble mind: only when God would decide to have iron without rust, Constantinople without the Turks, and the wolves harmless to the sheep, then perhaps there would not be Greeks in Moldavia and Wallachia, and they would not become boyars and engulf these two countries as they do now. . . . You can extinguish the fire, channel the water away, shelter yourselves from strong winds and take a rest; the sun can be covered by clouds, the night and its darkness can pass away and give way to light, but never can you find mercy, charity, justice or fear of God’s will in a Greek. Only when he cannot do harm does the Greek appear kind, while his character and his heart still seeks to do harm.⁸⁵

For Neculce, the Greek invasion was thus a calamity in the life of the Principalities, a genuine apocalypse against which there was no remedy, even if it was not only an unjust occurrence but also against nature, as he argues above. The same idea of the disaster of the Greek “invasion” was also expressed by the chronicler Simeon Dascalul, who exclaimed: “Punished is the land on which the Greek steps.”⁸⁶

⁸³ See P.P. Panaitescu, *Influența polonă în opera și personalitatea cronicarilor Grigore Ureche și Miron Costin* (Bucharest: Academia Romană, 1925).

⁸⁴ Ioan Neculce, *Letopiseșul Țării Moldovei (de la Dabija Vodă până la a doua domnie a lui Constantin Mavrocordat)* (Chișinău: Litera, 1999). Born in 1672, Ion Neculce was made a *spătar* (holder of the royal sword) under Anthioh Cantemir and *grand hatman* under Dimitrie Cantemir. After Russia and Cantemir’s defeat by the Ottomans in 1711, Ion Neculce accompanied the prince to Russia. He returned to Moldavia in 1719 and became *vornic* under Constantin Mavrocordat, until his death in 1745.

⁸⁵ Neculce, *Letopiseșul Țării Moldovei*, 88 (my translation).

⁸⁶ Simeon Dascalul in *Cronicele României sau Letopiseșele Moldaviei și Valahiei*, ed. Kogălniceanu, vol. 1, 438.

In addition to engendering a wide range of negative bilateral stereotypes, contemporary chronicles also document the violent form taken by the anti-Greek revolts in the principality, especially at grassroots level. As shown above, in their efforts to remove the Greeks from power, the boyars appealed to urban strata of the population and to the lower nobility for support, thus managing to forge a large social coalition against the Greeks, regarded as middlemen of the Ottoman exploitation. Their violence tended to be directed against all Greeks collectively, irrespective of their position in the local apparatus of power. Most often, as Neculce reports, public humiliation was employed: the Greeks were expelled from the local community and stripped of their clothes, symbolically denying them their privileged social status. The Greeks were also derided for their different identity (for instance, for speaking “broken Romanian”), and tragically, they also lost their lives, in public hunts that ended in lynchings and massacres.

The demonization of the Greeks in the local historiographical discourse is often accompanied by a discourse of (self-)victimization of the local inhabitants of the Principalities, who are portrayed as powerless, passive victims of the joint Greek-Ottoman aggression. Although writing in the service of the Phanariot Prince Nicolae Mavrocordat, the Moldavian chronicler Axinte Uricariul (ca. 1670–1733), for example, contrasted the deplorable situation of the local inhabitants, called *pământenii*, with the restless and aggressive foreign peoples around them, such as the Turks, Tartars, Greeks, Serbs and Albanians.⁸⁷

6. Drit de pământean: *The “Greek Question” and the Birth of Citizenship in the Principalities*

In addition to hostile discourses and attempts to physically suppress political opponents, another major manifestation of the “Greek question” in the Principalities consisted of legal initiatives meant to obstruct the migration of the Ottoman Greek elite. According to local custom (called *obiceiul pământului*), naturalization in the Principalities could be obtained through marriage to a local woman, ennoblement, or—for agricultural laborers, merchants and artisans—settlement in the country with the intention of living there. Faced with increasing Ottoman Greek immigration in the Principalities, local boyars repeatedly attempted to

⁸⁷ Axinte Uricariul, *Cronica paralelă a Țării Române și a Moldovei* (Bucharest: Minerva, 1994), vol. 2, 162.

either abolish this permissive naturalization policy or restrict its application, since it facilitated Ottoman Greeks' access to landed property and nobility status.

The first legal document that restricted the access of Ottoman Greeks to high offices in the Principalities was the treaty signed by Sigismund Báthory with a delegation of Wallachian boyars on May 20, 1595, during the reign of Mihai Viteazul. In Article 20, the treaty forbade the access of the Greeks to the Wallachian *divan* or other higher ranks: "Someone of Greek origin [*Graecus natione* in the original Latin formulation, or *de neam grecesc* in the Romanian translation] cannot be part of the twelve boyars under oath, and cannot acquire any rank or dignitary in the *government* of the country, but should be free to practice trade."⁸⁸ Another relevant example of this legal campaign is the meeting of the Wallachian estates that took place in 1631 during the second reign of Prince Leon Tomşa (r. 1629–1632). As in his first reign, Tomşa came to the country accompanied by a large Greek clientele. In order to fulfill urgent pecuniary obligations to the Porte, Leon Tomşa initiated a harsh fiscal policy, holding the boyars responsible for levying taxes in the territories under their jurisdiction, thus making them liable for those taxes that had to be covered by eventual fugitives from their estates. In response to this policy, a revolt erupted against the prince in Oltenia. In order to gain political support against the boyars' uprising, Leon Tomşa convoked a meeting of the Wallachian assembly of estates on July 23, 1631, in Bucharest. Instead of responding to the prince's grievances, the assembly imposed its own political agenda, asking for the recognition of the nobility's legal immunity and fiscal privileges, and measures against the "foreign Greeks" who colonized the country's administration. It also demanded a strict application of the local mores on naturalization, so that "those who have married into the country with Romanian women and possess landed property should live on their estate and fulfill the duties due of the inhabitants of the country." In turn, those foreigners who acquired property in the country but had their family elsewhere had to either leave or settle permanently in Wallachia.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, vol. 3, part 1, 210–213; *Mihai Viteazul în conştiinţa europeană*, vol. 1, 87–99.

⁸⁹ An abridged version was first published in *Magazin istoric pentru Dacia*, vol. 1 (1845), 122–125. For the full text, see *Documenta Romaniae historica: B. Tara Românească*, vol. 23 (1630–1632), ed. Andrei Oŭetea, et al. (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1966), doc. no. 255, 406–409. Also reproduced in Bogdan Murgescu, ed., *Istoria României în texte* (Bucharest: Corint, 2001), 119. For an analysis of this document as

The document is highly illustrative of the transformation of the anti-Greek campaign into a militant program of social and political change. The demands were voiced in the name of the local, autochthonous party, opposed to foreigners. The main complaint was that the “foreign Greeks” spoiled valuable traditions, ignored local custom and introduced bad habits in the Principalities. The final resolution asserted that “all needs and poverty” of the country were due to foreign Greeks, who “mercilessly sell the country,” “break all good mores,” bought and sold official positions and “mercilessly exploit the poor.” In order to forge consensus around his throne, Leon Tomșa assumed this platform, asserting that “I have thrown *foreign Greeks* out, since they were hostile to our country.”⁹⁰

The conflict between the estates and the prince resumed in 1669, when another revolt forced Prince Radu Leon, the son of Leon Tomșa, to issue another anti-Greek *hrisov* reiterating the exclusion of Greeks from office “as evil and hostile people.”⁹¹ The *hrisov* extended this measure to the Greek clergy as well, arguing that “these foreign Greeks have never been useful to the country or to the principedom, but caused harm and loses as evil people without fear of God.”⁹² In 1685 the chronicler Ion Neculce reported yet another anti-Greek revolt occasioned by the dethronement of Prince Dumitrașcu Cantacuzino.⁹³

These resolutions of the estate assemblies demonstrate the tendency to implement a legal regime of estates in the Principalities. The assemblies’ agenda, which combined demands for the removal of the Greeks from office with measures meant to reduce taxation and alleviate the hardships of certain lower social categories, points out the social implications of the “Greek question” in the Principalities and its wide-ranging political

an indication of the regime of nobility estates in the Principalities, see Brătianu, *Sfatul domnesc*, 84.

⁹⁰ In discussing the resolution of the assembly, Andrei Pippidi interpreted these “xenophobic measures” as a political diversion meant to exploit the acute sociopolitical conflicts by turning them against the Greeks. See Pippidi, *Tradiția politică*, 112.

⁹¹ See the text in *Magazin istoric pentru Dacia* (Bucharest: Colegiul Național, 1845), vol. 1, 131–134; reprinted in Nicolae Bălcescu, *Opere: Scrieri istorice, politice și economice*, vol. 1, part 1, ed. G. Zane (Bucharest: Fundația pentru Literatură și Artă “Regele Carol II,” 1940), 295–296; for comments on this *hrisov*, see also Brătianu, *Sfatul domnesc*, 95–96.

⁹² *Magazin istoric pentru Dacia*, vol. 1, 132; and Bălcescu, *Opere*, vol. 1, part 1, 296.

⁹³ *Istoria României*, 120. The exclusion of foreigners from office did not go unchallenged. Antim Ivireanu, the Metropolitan of Wallachia, who was of Georgian descent, reacted against the exclusion of foreigners from lay or religious offices, arguing that “before Christ we are all one.” He also pointed to the long tradition of immigration in the Principalities, emphasizing that “I am not the only one who has been a foreign metropolitan and archbishop in Wallachia.” See Antim Ivireanu, *Opere* (Bucharest: 1972), 231.

ramifications. The campaign of closure conducted by noble estates was thus a typical defensive reaction of an interest group against outside penetration. According to Gheorghe Brătianu,

the historian familiar with the general features of the estates recognizes—in the Principalities as well—the adversity toward foreigners that was so manifest in the fight against Greeks conducted by nobility estates in the seventeenth century. Originating, as everywhere, from the need to defend their privileges and especially their state dignities against the competition of foreigners, and preoccupied with maintaining existing agreements against the fiscal offensive instigated by the Porte, the xenophobia of the estates provided the background on which the spoken language of the country developed.⁹⁴

The anti-Greek campaign increased estate solidarity and the bonds between local nobles, paving the way toward the emergence of future paradigms of collective identity. Anti-Greek xenophobia was “the expression of the reaction of the aristocratic stratum against the sovereign power that utilized foreign instruments to attain its goals. The consciousness of belonging ‘to the fatherland’ thus animated the very same people who were united by estate interests.”⁹⁵

The political victory of the nobility, however, was short-lived. Restrictive legal regulations did little to stop the penetration of Ottoman Greeks, due mostly to the support the latter enjoyed from the prince and the Porte. Moreover, the estates’ resistance against Greek penetration and the revival of the anti-Ottoman crusade during the time of Radu Mihnea triggered the firm intervention of the Ottoman Empire, which stripped the assembly of its right to elect the prince and instead imposed its own candidates for the throne, thus hampering the development of a regime of estates.

7. *The Phanariot Regime and the “Greek Question” during the Long Eighteenth Century, 1711–1821*

In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, a new collective actor appeared on the Principalities’ political scene, one which was to greatly affect their internal development, particularly the structure and legal status of the nobility: the Phanariots. The term “Phanariot” originated from

⁹⁴ Brătianu, *Sfatul domnesc*, 299.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

Greek sources as a self-ascribed label for a Phanar-based Greek interest-group, but was in fact rarely used. Instead the Phanariots called themselves “*archontes*” (rulers), “*archontes* of the Greek nation,” “compatriot notables” or “archontal group,”⁹⁶ alluding to a growing sense of corporate identity as legitimate representatives of Ottoman Greek society. In the Principalities, as noted, the Istanbul-based immigrants with a Hellenic cultural background, and often of Greek ethnic origin as well, were generically called *greci țarigrădeni* (Greeks from Constantinople). It is important to note that local sources differentiated between the fifteenth- and mostly sixteenth-century waves of Greek or Hellenized migrants originating from Asia Minor or the Greek islands in search of better fortunes in the Principalities using Byzantine, Ottoman or Orthodox Church channels of social mobility on the one hand, and the new Ottoman immigrants who arrived in the Principalities in the seventeenth century as part of an organized system of Ottoman dominance, involving Istanbul-based merchants, creditors and administrators. Local sources in the Principalities did not distinguish, however, between the Istanbul-based Greeks of the seventeenth century and the Phanariots proper of the eighteenth century, an indication that these migration waves were perceived as part of the same phenomenon.

In the academic literature, as Andrei Pippidi has pointed out, the term “Phanariot” was employed during the time with at least three main meanings, to designate: 1) in a general sense, a member of the post-Byzantine Greek aristocratic elite who lived in the Istanbul district of Phanar prior to 1821; 2) in a narrow sense, the princes of Moldavia and Wallachia recruited from the ranks of the Greek aristocratic elite of Phanar; 3) in a wider regional sense, all members of the ruling elites in Southeastern Europe of Greek origin or education during the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth century.⁹⁷

As a heterogeneous, composite group, the Phanariots are notoriously difficult to define. Their varied ethnic origins, social affiliations and professional backgrounds and the open-ended nature of their group membership defy clear-cut sociological definitions. Some analysts defined the Phanariots as a “closed class” or a “caste;” the latter term is rejected both by Andrei Pippidi, who pointed out that the Phanariots’ source of power

⁹⁶ Socrates C. Zervos, “Recherches sur les Phanariotes: A Propos de Leur Sentiment d’Appartenance au même groupe social,” *Revue des Etudes Sud-Est Européennes* 27, no. 4 (1989): 307.

⁹⁷ Andrei Pippidi, “Phanar, Phanariotes, Phanariotisme,” *Revue des Etudes Sud-Est Européennes* 13, no. 2 (1975): 231.

derived from them holding public offices,⁹⁸ and Socrate C. Zervos, on the grounds that membership in the group in fact remained remarkably open to newcomers.⁹⁹ In her comprehensive monograph on the Phanariots, Christine Philliou defined the Phanariots as consisting of the “Phanar-based elites and their retinues or affiliates,” as opposed to either the *askeri* or Muslim functionaries or the non-Phanariot local Christian elites in the Ottoman Empire (*kocabaşı*, or *demogerontes*).¹⁰⁰

To be sure, the new elite interest group was not an entirely new phenomenon in the Ottoman administrative elite: the Phanariot oligarchy was in fact a product of the larger pool of the Levantine Greek elite, already active in the Principalities since 1575, as well. From this perspective, the Phanariots cannot be credited with establishing the Greek or Hellenic networks of power and influence in the Ottoman Empire, which existed before they came into being as a group, most notably the Patriarchy and the numerous class of merchants and bankers. The Phanariots nevertheless became a catalyst of the Greek networks of power and influence; thus they can be better described as a network of networks or indeed, in Philliou's words, a “portal” for the Greek networks in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰¹

Rejecting the term “regime” to describe the Phanariot era, I prefer to speak instead of *Phanariot rule*, which I define as a power structure dominated by a corporate oligarchy, consisting of a small number of families distinguished by their wealth, ties and political influence over the Ottoman administration. This oligarchy was corporate since it was based on a semi-closed group or clique recruited on the basis of certain forms of socialization and acculturation involving language, education, skills, loyalty and services to the sultan. Even if the Phanariot corporate oligarchic rule was controlled by a few prominent families who passed their influence from one generation to the next, membership in this group was not strictly limited to an exclusive and thus small clique based on ethnicity, noble origin or social position but was open to new members through various forms of network recruitments or through matrimonial or political alliances. What made this oligarchy unusual was that it was appointed to office by the sultan; thus it can be defined as an “oligarchy of office” whose dominance was based on its influence over the Porte, deriving from its members' linguistic and professional qualifications, wealth and family

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Zervos, “Recherches sur les Phanariotes,” 311, note 48.

¹⁰⁰ Philliou, *Biography of an Empire*, xx, xx–xxi.

¹⁰¹ Philliou, *Biography of an Empire*.

ties. Through their officially endorsed monopolies over certain offices, the Phanariots “built a house (and households) of their own within the Ottoman domains.”¹⁰²

It is important to stress that the Phanariot oligarchy did not owe its dominance to a certain noble Byzantine origin or its superior military power. Although most Phanariots claimed nobility of blood, ‘forging’ their origins in the Byzantine nobility, the overwhelming majority were in fact *nouveaux riches* who used money and appointed dignities in order to claim nobility status. Philiou points out that, although the Phanariots were not technically part of the Ottoman ruling class of *askeri* and as such did not enjoy *askeri* immunities, they were nevertheless comparable in many ways with the *ayans*, who remained a model for the Phanariot household. This comparison is certainly instructive, as it highlights the fact that, in forming their own “webs of patronage,” Phanariot families borrowed kinship practices and terminologies from their *vezir* and *aryan* counterparts.¹⁰³ I would argue at the same time that the Phanariots’ status in the Principalities might provide us with an additional clue of their source of corporate identity. First, one should not overlook the fact that the Ottoman system did not allow hereditary aristocracy. From this perspective, it was important that the Phanariots could use the office of the princedom in order to acquire and consolidate a *hereditary* noble status within the Ottoman realm. Second, many of the Phanariots acquired landed estates in the Principalities, married local women, Romanianized their names and thus became part of the local boyar class. In this sense, it was precisely the office of the prince or *hospodar* of the Principalities that allowed the Phanariots to fashion themselves as an aristocracy and to transmit their status from one generation to the next.

The multiplicity of contexts in which the Phanariots operated thus allowed them to exploit various systems and to extract symbolic or material advantages that could then be used in other contexts. On the one hand, they were regular Ottoman subjects and, as such, they were quite vulnerable to Ottoman pressure. On the other hand, in the Principalities the Phanariots could in many ways transcend Ottoman direct control, behaving as autocratic despots in their own right and as heads of a Christian aristocracy of sorts. Moreover, through their position as heads of border provinces or as dragomans, ambassadors or functionaries of other

¹⁰² Ibid., 6.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 7.

empires, the Phanariots forged transnational networks that transcended the realm of the Ottoman Empire, operating in between three empires. From this perspective, while the Phanariots were indeed “a composite Orthodox Christian elite that grew out of the social and political fabric of Ottoman governance,” as Philliou pointed out,¹⁰⁴ they cannot be confined solely to the Ottoman context. The Principalities were an important unit that allowed the Phanariots to transcend, in many ways, the Ottoman world.

8. *A Greek Victory? From Levantine to Phanariot Domination*

Phanariot rule (1711/1716–1821) marked a decline in the international status of the Principalities, as Moldavia and Wallachia were almost *de facto* assimilated to the status of a regular Ottoman province.¹⁰⁵ During that period, the internal autonomy of the Principalities was severely curtailed, their ruling princes were no longer elected by the local *boyars*, their aristocracy was further infiltrated by Ottoman Greeks coming mostly from the imperial capital, while their pecuniary obligations to the Porte amounted to a significant economic burden. Moreover, under Phanariot rule, Ottoman Greek infiltration into the church and state apparatus in the Principalities reached a peak. First, the office of the principedom was monopolized by eleven major families: Mavrocordatos, Racovița, Ghika, Rossetti, Ypsilantis, Karatzas, Soutzos, Mavroyenis, Mourouzis, Khantzeris and Callimachi. Most of these families claimed Byzantine aristocratic lineage; it should be noted, however, that some of them were in fact Hellenized Romanians, such as the Racovițas and the Callimachis, who originated from Bukovina, or even Albanians, such as the Ghikas.¹⁰⁶ Second, the Phanariot princes came into the country accompanied by a large personal clientele and rewarded it with positions in the state apparatus. This practice gave the

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 5.

¹⁰⁵ On the vast literature on the Phanariots, see A.D. Xenopol, *Epoca fanarioților 1711–1821* (Iași: Goldner, 1892); Nicolae Iorga, *Cultura română supt fanarioți* (Bucharest: Socec, 1898); and *Istoria literaturii române în secolul al XVIII-lea (1688–1821)*, 2 vols. (Bucharest, 1901); Andrei Pippidi, “Nicolas Soutzo (1798–1871) et la faillite du régime phanariote dans les Principautés Roumaines,” *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 6 (1968): 313–338. For the historiographical discourse, see Leonidas Rados, “Societatea Junimea și interesul pentru studiile bizantine,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie “A. D. Xenopol”* 41 (2004): 513–528; Leonidas Rados, “Influența greacă în disputele istoriografice din spațiul românesc în a doua jumătate a secolului XIX,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie “G. Barițiu, Cluj-Napoca”* 47 (2008): 123–142.

¹⁰⁶ W. Wilkinson, *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia* (London, 1820), 130.

Ottoman Greeks unrestricted access to offices and ennoblement. Favored by the prince, Ottoman Greeks thus not only could annul previous anti-immigration measures but managed to have a right to office consecrated by diplomatic documents. The Hatt-ı Şerif of 1774 stipulated that in the two Principalities “the rulers, as well as holders of aristocratic offices, can be elected from indigenous as well as Greek boyars.”¹⁰⁷

Ottoman Greek penetration into the local aristocracy did not grow steadily but fluctuated over the duration of Phanariot rule. For example, as Table 1 shows, the percentage of seats held by Ottoman Greeks in the princely council (also known as the *divan*) in the two Principalities varied from 32 percent under Ion T. Callimachi (r. 1758–1761) to 5.5 percent under Scarlat Calimachi (r. 1812–1819) in Moldavia, and from 34.3 percent under Nicolae Mavrocordat (r. ca. 1716, 1719–1730) to 12 percent under Ion Mavrocordat (1716–1719) in Wallachia.

Certainly, given the difficulties in neatly differentiating the local boyars from the Ottoman Greeks settled in the Principalities—discussed at length in this essay—the data provided in Table 1 should be taken merely as a general orientation. However, the figures leave no doubt that, although Phanariot rule greatly boosted the Ottoman Greeks’ presence and political role in the Principalities, local boyars continued to dominate, at least numerically, the princely *divans*. These conclusions are further confirmed by additional statistics indicating that between 1715 and 1800, the most important state offices—eight in the first half of that period and fifteen in the second half—were held by a total of eighty-nine families. Among them thirty-seven were Moldo-Wallachian families, seven were naturalized families, and forty-four were foreign families, mostly Ottoman Greeks. Proportionally, Moldo-Wallachian or naturalized families made up 50.5 percent of great officeholders and cumulatively held office for a total of 512 years, while foreigners made up 49.5 percent of the total number of officeholders, but cumulatively held office for only 176 years. During the same period, 65.62 percent of the second-rank offices were held by Moldo-Wallachians (125 Romanian and twenty-two naturalized families), while 34.4 percent of the total was held by foreign holders (seventy-seven families).¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Condurachi, *Cîteva cuvinte*, 49.

¹⁰⁸ See Ionaşcu, “Le degré de l’influence des Grecs des Principautés Roumaines,” 217–227. For this statistical analysis, see Dan Berindei and Irina Gavrilă, “Analyse de la composition de l’ensemble des familles de grands dignitaires de la Valachie au XVIII^e siècle,” in *XV Congreso Internacional de las Ciencias Genealogica y Heraldica* (Madrid, September

Table 1. Percentage of seats occupied by Ottoman Greeks in the princely *divans* of Moldavia and Wallachia under Phanariot princes, 1711/1716–1821

Moldavia			Wallachia		
Prince	Reign	% of Greeks	Prince	Reign	% of Greeks
Ion T. Callimachi	1758–1761	32%	Nic. Mavrocordat	1716, 1719–1730	34.3%
Scarlat Gr. Ghica	1757–1758	31.4%	Stefan Racoviță	1764–1765	33.3%
Mihai Gr. Suțu	1819–1821	30%	Constantin Hangerli	1797–1799	28.1%
Grigore T. Callimachi	1761–1769*	27.7%	Alex. Suțu	1818–1821	26.8%
Ion N. Mavrocordat	1743–1747	26.3%	Ion Gr. Caragea	1812–1818	25.6%
Grigore II Ghica	1726–1748*	24.3%	Mihai Racoviță	1730–1731, 1741–1744	25%
Matei Gr. Ghica	1753–1756	23.9%	Alexandru Scarlat Ghica	1766–1768	25%
Const. M. Racoviță	1749–1757*	22.5%	Grigore III Ghica	1768–1769	25%
N. Mavrocordat	1711–1715	21.6%	N. Mavrogheni	1786–1790	24.3%
Grigore III Ghica	1764–1777*	20.8%	Const. N. Mavrocordat	1730–1769*	23.7%
Mihai Suțu	1792–1795	20.8%	Mihai Suțu	1783–1802*	23.7%
Const. Moruzi	1777–1782	15.1%	Alexandru C. Moruzi	1796–1801*	23.7%
Const. Al Ipsilanti	1799–1801	15.1%	Grigore II Ghica	1735–1752*	21.6%
Alex. Moruzi	1792–1806*	13.8%	Scarlat Gr. Ghica	1758–1761*	21.4%
Alex. C. Mavrocordat	1782–1785	13.5%	Const. M. Racoviță	1753–1764*	20.9%
Const. N. Mavrocordat	1733–1769*	13.4%	Alexandru Ipsilanti	1775–1797*	16.8%
Alex Callimachi	1795–1799*	8.7%	Matei Ghica	1752–1753	16.6%
Alex. I. Mavrocordat	1785–1786	8.5%	Const. A. Ipsilanti	1802–1807	14.5%
Mihai Racoviță	1716–1726	6.5%	Nic. Caragea	1782–1783	14.2%
Scarlat Calimachi	1812–1819	5.5%	Ion. Mavrocordat	1716–1719	12%

Ionașcu, "Le degré de l'influence des Grecs des Principautés Roumaines dans la vie politique de ces pays," 226–228.

* Intermittently.

Not included:

For Moldavia: *divans* under Al. Ipsilanti (r. 1787–1788) and Man. Giani-Russet (1788–1789) for lack of documents; *divans* under the Russian occupation, 1769–1774, and 1806–1812, only with local boyars; Russian-Austrian occupation: 1788–1791.

For Wallachia: Man. Giani-Russet (1770–1771); *divans* under the Russian occupation, 1769–1774, and 1806–1812, only with local boyars; Russian-Austrian occupation: 1789–1791.

19–25, 1982), 239–254. For low-ranking dignitaries, see Dan Berindei and Irina Gavrila, "Considérations sur les dignités de seconde et troisième classe en Valachie au XVIII^e siècle. Le problème de la pénétration Gréco-Phanariote," in *Actas do 17 Congresso Internacional de las Ciencias Genealogica y Heraldica* (Lisbon, 1986), 46–62. On aristocracy in Moldavia, see also Gheorghe Platon and Alexandru-Florin Platon, *Boierimea din Moldova în secolul al XIX-lea. Context european, evoluție socială și politică (Date statistice și observații istorice)* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1995).

By and large, the local boyars thus continued to provide the social and political basis for the Phanariot rule, as Moldo-Wallachian boyars still constituted a slight majority of the aristocracy. Foreign penetration was also weakened by the temporary residence of Ottoman Greeks, who generally left the country once their protector lost power, and by the steady assimilation of foreign elements who resided for long periods in the Principalities, mainly through matrimonial alliances. Although Ottoman Greeks were fewer in number than the local boyars, in practice they monopolized the most important state offices, due to their overwhelming influence over the prince. This gave them the upper hand in daily affairs, accounting for a significant shift in real power from native to foreign nobles.

The conflict between the local great boyars and the Greek nobility of office thus continued uninterrupted during the eighteenth century, but took new forms due to the Phanariot monopoly over the principedom. The local boyars revolted repeatedly against those princes who ruled almost exclusively with the help of the Greeks. The boyars' opposition, though not very efficient in removing the Greeks from dignities, led to numerous changes in the princely office. Thus the boyars revolted against Matei Ghica (r. 1752–1753) and, with the help of the city dwellers, obtained his dismissal by the Porte. Opposition to the Greek *protipendada* continued under the second reign of Constantin Racoviță (r. 1756–1757) as well. In order to remove the local boyars' opposition, Racoviță exiled their leaders, the Văcărești brothers, to Cyprus, but then asked the Porte for his transfer to Moldavia in view of the Wallachian boyars' impassioned opposition. The boyars complained to the Porte about the rule of Constantin Mavrocordat (r. 1756–1758 and 1761–1763), as well, and finally got him dismissed. Violent riots erupted again under Ștefan Racoviță (r. 1764–1765). To weaken the local opposition, Racoviță arrested numerous boyars and hanged their leader, Iordache Băjescu. The ensuing revolt, supported by Bucharest's population, led nevertheless to the prince's dismissal from office by the sultan.

In Moldavia Greek influence grew under Scarlat Ghica (r. 1757–1758). The Greeks also managed to penetrate the local administration, which was traditionally the fief of the local nobility. The boyars' revolt led to Ghica's removal. The new prince, Ioan Teodor Callimachi (r. 1758–1761), exiled the main boyar opponents. In 1759 the boyars' revolt against Callimachi was also supported by the Iași city-dwellers. The violent revolt was suppressed again, but the prince was eventually dismissed by the sultan because he lacked domestic support. The boyars petitioned the Porte against Prince Grigore Calimachi (r. 1767–1769), as well, but the sultan sided with the new prince, forcing the boyars to accommodate.

Overall, however, in the second half of the eighteenth century, the boyars' resistance gradually faded away. In reaction to the unshakable Greek dominance in local affairs, most local nobles left the princely court and withdrew to the countryside, adopting an attitude of passive resistance that often took on 'national' overtones. At the same time, the massive presence of Ottoman Greeks in the Principalities generated new patterns of symbiosis, visible mainly in the boyars' growing assimilation to Greek culture and accommodation to the new rule.

9. *Phanariot Rule and the Development of Citizenship Legislation in the Principalities*

Although stigmatized in the era of Romantic nationalism as a corrupt, decadent and largely anti-national regime, the Phanariot princes' rule in fact had a strong impact on the sociopolitical organization of the two Principalities. Their wide-ranging reforms were prompted, on the one hand, by their precarious political position. To be nominated a prince, Phanariot candidates had to bid for investiture to the Porte. Once in power, they needed to pay regular confirmations, cover tribute and other financial obligations to the Porte, reimburse their creditors, assure the well-being of their clientele, and accumulate personal wealth as compensation for their own personal risk. Since the Phanariot princes' political survival depended on their ability to extract taxes quickly, they initiated reforms aimed at building an efficient state machinery for tax collection. On the other hand, however, fiscal reorganization involved reforms in other sociopolitical domains as well, resulting in sweeping political changes along the lines of enlightened absolutism, following the Habsburg and Russian models.¹⁰⁹ The implementation of this reform program was facilitated by the Phanariots' peculiar political position: while in relation to the sultan the two princes were high-ranking Ottoman officials, domestically they possessed all the attributes of a sovereign.

The ideological foundation of the Phanariot regime was established by Prince Constantine Mavrocordat, who ruled six times in Wallachia and four times in Moldavia. Acting along the lines of his 1741 constitutional

¹⁰⁹ The impact of the Habsburg Enlightenment on the political organization in the Principalities was documented by Șerban Papacostea in *Oltenia sub stăpînire austriacă (1718–1739)* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1971). He pointed out that some of the reforms introduced by Habsburg authorities in Oltenia during their temporary occupation of the province (1718–1739) shaped the political agenda of the Phanariots in the Principalities.

project for the Principalities, Mavrocordat implemented major reforms in both countries. He reorganized their administration, reclassified the nobility and redefined their privileges, centralized the state apparatus and regulated the status of the monasteries.¹¹⁰ The campaign of centralization inaugurated by Mavrocordat was continued in three main directions. First, there was a need to reform the corrupt and highly unstable administration of the country. This led to efforts at streamlining the bureaucracy by abolishing the system of selling offices, implementing bureaucratic training and educational requirements for officeholders, separating personal income from the office budget and introducing a set salary, and abolishing internal border taxes.

The second direction of centralization was the reorganization of the Principalities' fiscal system. Traditionally, taxation was not a function of personal property and was applied to the head of the family, with clergy and boyars exempted from any financial obligations. This policy was further aggravated by the corruption of tax collectors, which resulted in a discretionary and irregular tax system. Fiscal reforms therefore concentrated on introducing a unified and centralized budget policy, the regularization of tax leverage and the amount of financial obligation, and efforts to reduce the boyars' fiscal immunity. These were accompanied by attempts to achieve demographic stability. Due to recurrent wars and a steady rise in feudal obligations, significant out-migrations occurred in both Principalities, across the Danube into Bulgarian lands or Dobrudja. Between 1740 and 1831, 36,000 Wallachian peasants emigrated to other Ottoman territories; 15,000 of these peasants emigrated in 1742 alone. There were also recurring migrations to Russia and Ukraine: according to official records, 600 families emigrated east in 1782.¹¹¹ In response to this labor drain, the princes attempted to entice emigrants to return, and to attract foreigners in order to increase the tax base and to expand the agricultural labor force. To this end, they provided new colonists with fiscal and administrative privileges. Most importantly, in March and August 1745, Constantin Mavrocordat abolished serfdom in Wallachia and, respectively, Moldavia. These measures gradually attracted numerous Balkan immigrants into the Principalities, coming in several compact waves: 1769–1774, 1793–1806, 1806–1814 and 1828–1830. In total, there were 49,580 immigrants, mostly

¹¹⁰ See Florin Constantiniu, *Constantin Mavrocordat* (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1985).

¹¹¹ Luis Roman, "Evoluția numerică a populației Țării Românești și migrația externă (1739–1831)," *Studii și articole de istorie* 23 (1973): 17.

Bulgarians, but also Greeks and Serbs. A separate category of immigrants was the *băjenari* (from *băjenar*, meaning an economic or political refugee) coming from Transylvania. Between 1740 and 1831 alone, 50,850 *băjenari* immigrated into the Principalities.¹¹²

The third direction of centralization pursued by the Phanariot princes was legal codification. This process had already begun in the seventeenth century, with the adoption of *Pravilele Impăratești* (1646), during the reign of Vasile Lupu in Moldavia (r. 1634–1653) and of *Pravila bisericească* (1640) and *Îndreptarea legii* (1652) in Wallachia, published during the reign of Matei Bassarab (r. 1632–1654).¹¹³ Before then, the main source of legislation in the Principalities was the local custom, known—as noted above—as *obiceiul pământului*. These mores functioned as legal tradition at the local level. They differed greatly from one region to another and were never systematically codified, except for few stipulations adopted by written laws. The enactment of written codes was an indication of the consolidation of central power and the decline of village communities and corporate bodies. Although some Romanian historians attempted to present them as first examples of national codification, the two codes stemmed in fact from Byzantine imperial law, whose usage had a long history in the Principalities, represented mainly by the collection of laws compiled in the ninth century and known as *Basilica*.¹¹⁴ In addition, they also incorporated canon law and familial lineage established by the Orthodox Church.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the Phanariots resumed efforts at legal codification as a part of their campaign of centralization. In the first stage, legal centralization took the form of the legal offensive of Byzantinism at the expense of local mores and the established feudal hierarchy in the Principalities. The main proponent of Byzantinism in Wallachia was Michel Fotino, a Greek judge working in Bucharest from 1764 to 1781 who authored three codification projects (1765, 1766, and 1777) emulating the Byzantine *Basilical* and *Codex Justinianus*. His projects failed to be adopted due to opposition by local boyars, who resisted those stipulations that increased the power of the prince and granted foreigners

¹¹² Roman, "Evoluția numerică," 18.

¹¹³ The collection was generally referred to as *Pravila lui Mateiu Basarab*, or *Pravila de la Tîrgoviște* (Pravila cea mare). It was translated into Romanian by Daniil Panonianul. See *Îndreptarea Legii*, ed. Andrei Rădulescu (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1962).

¹¹⁴ Significantly, the codes were not even approved by the prince, but they had automatic validity because they stemmed from Byzantine imperial law. See Valentin Al. Georgescu, "Réalités roumaines et initiatives juridiques phanariotes. A propos de l'échec de l'œuvre codificatrice de Michel Fotino (Photeinopoulos)," in *Symposium*, 305.

unrestricted access to land and positions.¹¹⁵ After several attempts, the first Phanariot legal codes were finally adopted: *Pravilniceasca Condică* in Wallachia, granted by the Prince Alexandru Ipsilanti in 1780 and in effect until 1817, and the *Recoil* of Alexandru Donici, applied in Moldavia until 1818. Both featured a balanced combination of Byzantine and local legal practices.¹¹⁶

Phanariot codification culminated in the adoption of new civil codes—*Legiuirea Caragea* in Wallachia and *Codul Calimach* in Moldavia. The two codes were named after the ruling princes in the two Principalities and were promulgated almost concomitantly, on July 1, 1817, in Wallachia, and on September 1, 1818, in Moldavia.¹¹⁷ With subsequent modifications, the Calimach and Caragea Codes remained in effect in the Principalities for almost half a century, until the promulgation of a unified Civil Code for the two Principalities on December 1, 1865.

The adoption of the new civil codes was a priority of the Phanariot program of legal reforms in both Principalities. As the Moldavian Prince Scarlat Calimachi stated in the introduction to the Moldavian code, “we decided to establish first of all a civil code, since we regard it as the most necessary of all parts of the legislation.”¹¹⁸ Prior to the adoption of these codes, legislation was based on a heterogeneous combination of unwritten customary law, Byzantine jurisprudence, and the codes assembled by previous princes, namely *Pravila bisericească*, *Indreptarea legii* and the *Pravilele Împărătești*. As the Wallachian *Legiuirea Caragea* pointed out, given this heterogeneous legal combination, “the country had practically no code, since the mores were continuously changing in many ways, so that they were in conflict with Byzantine codes, while the latter contained many ambiguous stipulations that contradicted each other, with harmful effects on the right of the inhabitants.”¹¹⁹

The new codes were devised as a comprehensive synthesis of the unwritten local mores, and the Byzantine collection of laws, to which

¹¹⁵ For a presentation of Fotino's program of codification and its political connotation, see *ibid.*, 301–314.

¹¹⁶ See *Pravilniceasca Condică (1780). Ediție critică*, ed. Alexandru Rădulescu (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1957).

¹¹⁷ See “Introducere,” in *Codul Calimach. Ediție Critică*, ed. Alexandru Rădulescu et. al. (Bucharest: Editura Academiei R.P.R., 1958), 5; and *Legiuirea Caragea. Ediție Critică*, ed. Alexandru Rădulescu et. al. (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1955), 2.

¹¹⁸ Prince Calimachi, “Hrisovul de promulgare,” in *Codul Calimach*, 51.

¹¹⁹ See “Poruncă domnească de punerea în lucrare a legiurei,” in *Legiuirea Caragea*, 2.

they added "the example of the newest European codes."¹²⁰ This was more evident in the case of the Moldavian Code, which was largely influenced by the content and organization of the 1811 Austrian Code,¹²¹ and occasionally by the 1804 French *Code Civil*, mostly concerning marriage and inheritance.¹²² For its part, the Wallachian Code mainly emulated the 1804 French *Code Civil*.

In codifying civil relations among inhabitants, the two codes adopted the modern legal theory of civil statuses, while simultaneously preserving existing feudal and religious distinctions. These resulted in a heterogeneous and complex system of legal classification. Inhabitants were divided according to gender, legal standing (slaves, free persons and freed slaves), religion (Christians and non-Christians) and citizenship (indigenous inhabitants, called *pământenii*, and foreigners, called *străini*). In regulating the rights and duties attached to each legal status, the two codes evinced an uneven combination of enlightened principles and medieval privileges. First, while allowing women a certain social visibility in accordance with customary law, both codes denied them political rights and some civil rights. Second, Article 5 of the Moldavian code introduced the advanced principle of the authority of the law, stating that "all the inhabitants of this principality (*mădularele principatului acestuia*), without exception, are subject to these laws."¹²³ However, additional articles differentiated among inhabitants according to their nobility status. Article 17 of the same code stated that "the privileges of the monasteries, of the church, of the clergy and of the boyars are considered rights and are included in the code."¹²⁴ These encompassed tax exemption, eligibility for office and landed estates, and the right to dispose of the labor of dependent peasantry (*clăcași*), whose labor and tax obligations were stipulated in detail.

¹²⁰ Prince Calimachi, "Hrisovul de promulgare," in *Codul Calimach*, 51.

¹²¹ Some authors go so far as to regard *Codul Calimach* as a copy of the Austrian one. See C.D. Triandaphyllopoulos, "Sur les sources du Code Calimaque," *Revista Istorică Română* (1931) vol. 1, note 20. More recent research invalidates his conclusion by highlighting the differences between the Moldavian and the Austrian codes. See "Introducere," in *Codul Calimach*, 17.

¹²² See Andrei Rădulescu, "Influența franceză asupra dreptului român până la 1864," *Analele Academiei Române, Memoriile Secției Istorice* 27 (1938), 12; also Valentin Al. Georgescu, "Trăsăturile generale și izvoarele Codului Calimachi," *Studii: Revista de Istorie* 4 (1960), 96.

¹²³ *Collecțiune de legiurile României vechi și cele noul: legi, proceduri, regulamente, tratate, convențiuni, decrete, instrucțiuni, formularii, tarife, tablouri, statute, concesiuni, etc.*, ed. Ioan M. Bujoreanu, 3 vols. (Bucharest: Tipografia Academiei Române, 1883–1899), vol. 3, 557.

¹²⁴ *Codul Calimach*, 69.

Legiuirea Caragea did not contain any express discriminatory clause based on religion. As for the *Codul Calimach*, it read: "Differences in religious belief do not have any effect on the exercise of certain rights, except for situations in which the current law would decide otherwise" (Article 47).¹²⁵ Complementing this stipulation, Article 91 forbade marriage between Christians and non-Christians, as well as between Orthodox and non-Orthodox believers. More importantly, Article 1430 forever denied Jews and Armenians the right to buy estates (*moșii de veci*). Article 1431 granted them the right to buy houses, taverns, and shops (*dughene—prăvălii*) in cities, while Armenians were also allowed to buy vineyards.¹²⁶

Most importantly, the codes took additional steps toward the formation of citizenship legislation in the Principalities. First, they adopted the *jus sanguinis* principle in ascribing citizenship. According to Article 44 of *Codul Calimach*, "He who has the right of a native [*drit de pământean*] has full access to political rights. Consequently, the son of a native, by birth, acquires the rights of a native [*dreptul unui mădulariu de pământean*]." *Codul Calimach* subjected foreigners to the authority of local law (Article 47) and conferred on them certain civil and economic rights, such as the right to be protected by the laws of the country, to appeal to justice and to practice trade or other economic activities (Article 45). At the same time, it denied them those rights that were reserved for natives or were subject to additional religious qualifications, such as the right to buy land or to take office (Article 45).

Significantly, although both codes employed the word "foreigners" (*străini*) and defined them as a separate legal category, none of them put forward rules of naturalization but merely relied on the existing inclusive naturalization practices. In 1764 the great boyars finally obtained a *hrisov* issued by Stefan Racoviță, forbidding marriage between local noble women and foreigners. A violation of this rule was to lead to deportation of foreigners, confiscation of their wealth and penalties against the priests officiating their marriage. Foreign women were allowed to marry local nobles, but they were forbidden to bring their families into the country.¹²⁷ But these restrictions were not implemented in practice. Moreover, despite pressure from local *boieri*, they were not included in the new civil codes, an indication of the strong political influence of Ottoman Greeks. In view

¹²⁵ Ibid., 81.

¹²⁶ *Collecțiune*, vol. 3, 639.

¹²⁷ Condurachi, *Cîteva cuvinte*, 59.

of the power struggle between the rival Greek and local boyar factions, the lack of stipulations regarding citizenship and naturalization was not an accident but a deliberate omission, marking Ottoman Greeks' victory over the local *boyar* factions in the legal field as well. In comparison, it is telling to note that the Austrian Code, an important source of *Codul Calimach*, contained detailed citizenship regulations.

In summary, the Calimach and Caragea Codes illustrate the process of absolutist codification. As in other European countries, absolutist regimes had an important role in harmonizing and systematizing the law, mainly by compiling the existing law and systematizing them in written codes of laws. Absolutist codification was an effective tool used by the central power in its struggle to control the emerging state machinery. It aimed at eliminating regional and feudal divisions as a way of limiting the power and influence of the nobility. Phanariot absolutist codification in Moldavia and Wallachia did not involve a revolutionary transformation of the existing sociopolitical system but confirmed nobility privileges. At the same time, however, it favored a cosmopolitan ethno-religious composition of the Principalities and did not set insurmountable legal obstacles against "unwanted" foreigners, as requested by aristocratic estates.

10. *Restoring the Regime of Nobility Estates:
Citizenship Under the Organic Statutes*

Phanariot rule ended in 1821 under the pressure of both external and internal factors. Externally, starting in the second half of the eighteenth century, the international status of the Principalities gradually improved, as part of the arduous European attempts of political reorganization of the borderlands lying between the three multinational empires in the region—Tsarist Russia, the Habsburg Empire and the Ottoman Empire, an issue generically called the "Eastern Question." Russia's westward territorial advancement spawned a long series of wars between the three powers between 1768 and 1834. Moldavia and Wallachia served as a battleground for the Russo-Turkish or Habsburg-Ottoman wars in 1768–1774, 1787–1792, 1806–1812 and 1828–1834 and experienced a total of nineteen years of military occupation in the space of sixty-six years.¹²⁸ This series of wars had direct consequences for the international status and internal

¹²⁸ Georgescu, *Political Ideas*, 22.

organization of the Principalities. On the one hand, the two countries suffered important territorial losses. In 1775 the northern part of Moldavia, called Bukovina, was annexed by the Habsburg Empire. In 1812 the eastern part of Moldavia, situated between the Prut and Dniester rivers, and which came to be known as Bessarabia, was annexed by Russia. On the other hand, the Principalities became an international diplomatic problem; their status was regulated by successive treaties between Russia and the Ottoman Empire at Küçük Kaynarca (1774), Svishtov (1791), Iași (1792), Bucharest (1812), Akkerman (1826) and Adrianople (1829). Gradually, Moldavia and Wallachia managed to escape the unilateral suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire, being placed in 1774 under the protectorate of Russia, and in 1856 under the collective protection of European powers, by the Convention of Paris. The starting point of this process was the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774), by which the Principalities were given the right to be represented at the High Porte by special diplomatic envoys or *chargés d'affaires* of the prince, and were placed under the dual authority of the Ottoman Empire, as the suzerain power, and of Russia, as a protecting power.¹²⁹ Russia's diplomatic intervention in the Principalities was part of its general offensive against the Ottoman Empire, wrapped under the banner of Orthodoxy and pan-Slavism.¹³⁰ Nevertheless, the Russian protectorate was also instituted at the specific request of the Moldavian and Wallachian boyars, who hoped that the czar would assist the Principalities in consolidating their autonomy.

In this geopolitical context, the violent Greek–Moldo/Wallachian oligarchic confrontation of the previous century gave way in the second half of the eighteenth century to a diplomatic confrontation for external diplomatic support. Starting in 1772, the Moldavian and Wallachian great boyars undertook unprecedented diplomatic activity and authored 290 collective petitions—called memoranda—addressed to Russia, the Porte and/or other European powers, asking for the restoration of the rights Moldavia and Wallachia had gained under the terms of the old treaties signed between the Principalities and the Porte, erroneously called “capitulations.” The content of the boyars’ memoranda varied, ranging from requests for the restoration of the “old rights” of the country to overt

¹²⁹ See “The Treaty of Kuciuk-Kainargi,” June 10, 1774, in *Acte și documente relative la istoria renascerei României*, eds. Dimitrie A. Sturdza and C. Colescu-Vartic, 10 vols. (Bucharest: Carol Göbl, 1889–1909), vol. 1, 125–138.

¹³⁰ See Barbara Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation of the Romanian National State, 1821–1878* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

claims for political independence.¹³¹ Moreover, in order to better promote their interests, Moldavian and Wallachian boyars came up with the “theory of the capitulation.” Mentioned for the first time during the Congress of Focșani (1772), this theory claimed that the Principalities submitted voluntarily to Ottoman suzerainty in exchange for the sultan’s military protection, and accused the Porte of violating the spirit and the content of these contracts.¹³²

In addition to the boyars’ diplomatic campaign, other factors undermining Phanariot rule were the resistance of local boyars against the centralizing campaign and against the “foreign” Greek-speaking clientele of the prince, and the emergence of the Romanian and Greek modern nationalism. Resistance against centralization took ‘national’ overtones; it was portrayed as a defense of the Principalities’ traditional rights against Phanariot despotism and foreign intervention, and contributing to the emergence of Romanian national consciousness in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and to its development into a full-fledged national movement in the first half of the nineteenth century. According to historian Vlad Georgescu, between 1750 and 1831 a “structural transformation” of political thinking occurred in the Principalities, under the impact of Enlightenment ideas, marked by the appearance of such notions as fatherland (*patrie*) and patriotism (*patriotism*), and concerns for administrative reforms.¹³³ Georgescu argued that the Enlightenment in Moldavia

¹³¹ In the usage of the boyars, “the capitulations” were an “invented tradition,” since the texts of the old *ahdnames* signed by Moldavia and Wallachia with the Porte were not preserved and the boyars had no direct knowledge of their specific content but could only infer their content from the unstable relationship between the Principalities and the Ottoman Empire. See Constantin Giurescu, *Capitulațiile Moldovei cu Poarta otomană* (Bucharest, 1908), reprinted in Constantin Giurescu, *Studii de istorie* (Bucharest: Editura Eminescu, 1993), 473–504; Ion Ionescu-Dolj, “Contribuții la lupta dusă de domnitorii români în contra introducerii și aplicării regimului capitulațiilor în Principate,” *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice* 3 (1940), 22; Hitchins, *The Romanians*, 7.

¹³² See petitions by the great Wallachian boyar Mihail Cantacuzino, entitled “Supunerea Țării Românești la turci,” “Firmele care întăreau privilegiile țării,” “Stricăciunea privilegiilor și ruinarea Țării Românești” and “Despre zahereaua de primavară și de toamnă,” in Georgescu, *Political Ideas*, 149–168.

¹³³ See Vlad Georgescu, *Political Ideas*; and Vlad Georgescu, *Istoria ideilor politice românești, 1369–1878* (Munich: Ion Dumitru Verlag, 1987). His conclusions were also confirmed by Stefan Lemny’s comprehensive analysis of the emergence and evolution of the idea of fatherland (*patrie*) in Romanian sociopolitical thought from the seventeenth century to 1848, in *Originea și cristalizarea ideii de patrie în cultura română* (Bucharest: Minerva, 1986). Focusing on several representative samples, such as introductions to books, various historical or belletristic writings, official princely or ecclesiastical documents, memoirs and travelogues, Lemny traced the crystallization of the discourse about the fatherland as a *forma mentis* of sociopolitical writings.

and Wallachia had an “aristocratic, reformative” character, as it was promoted mainly by writers originating from high- or middle-ranking *boieri* families.¹³⁴

Enlightenment ideas in the Principalities spread mainly under the influence of modern Greek scholarship. As Pascal Kitromilides pointed out, modern Greek scholars acted as intermediaries of Enlightenment culture in the Balkans, facilitating French influences and thus contributing to the crystallization of modern national identities and the rise of nationalism.¹³⁵ In the Principalities, Greek culture was disseminated mostly by the Princely Academies (*Academiile Domnești*) established by native princes in 1689 and 1707 in Bucharest and Iași, respectively. Reorganized several times under Phanariot rule following the model of the Greek Academy of Phanar in Istanbul, these academies were instrumental in the creation of a new, dynamic intellectual elite in the Principalities and, more generally, in the Balkans.¹³⁶ Their curriculum focused on the Greek-Roman classical heritage, but also on Enlightenment philosophical and scientific thought. Most importantly, modern Greek scholars in the Principalities also stimulated the development of the Romanian culture and language.

Coming of age intellectually during the Enlightenment period, the Romanian national movement had its origins in the Moldavian pro-Polish and anti-Greek cultural orientation, a tradition best represented by Moldavian chroniclers such as Grigore Ureche and Miron Costin in the seventeenth century. Educated at the Jesuit college of Bar, Costin articulated in his unfinished work titled *De neamul moldovenilor, din ce țară au ieșit strămoșii lor* [About the Moldavian People, Which Country Their Ancestors Came From] the first ideas about the Latin origin of the Romanians, thus making a groundbreaking contribution to the development of the cultural unity of all ethnic Romanians.¹³⁷ Similar views were also harbored by Moldavian scholar and prince Dimitrie Cantemir in his work *Descrip-*

¹³⁴ Georgescu, *Political Ideas*, 192.

¹³⁵ Paschalis Kitromilides, “Imagined Communities’ and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans,” *European History Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1989): 149–192; for the Romanian context, see Cornea, “Fanarioții ca intermediari ai integrării europene,” in *Originile romantismului*, 48–52.

¹³⁶ Ariadna Camariano-Cioran, *Academii domnești din București și Iași* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1971); *Les académies princières de Bucarest et de Jassy et leurs professeurs* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1974).

¹³⁷ See Miron Costin, *Cartea pentru descălecatul de nteiu a Terei Moldovei și Nemului Moldovenescu* in *Cronicele României, Seu Letopiseele Moldaviei și Valahiei*, ed. Kogălniceanu, vol. 1, 1–84, republished as Costin, *De Neamul Moldovenilor, din ce țară au ieșit strămoșii lor* (1914) (see also note 16).

tio Moldaviae, and especially in his unfinished work *Hronicul Vechimei a Româno-Moldo-Vlahilor* [Chronicle on the Ancientness of the Romanian-Moldo-Wallachians].¹³⁸ In the eighteenth century, given the cultural-political domination of the Phanariots, these ideas did not find fertile soil in the Principalities, but in the activity of the "Transylvanian School" (*Școala ardeleană*) emerging in Romanian Greek-Catholic intellectual centers and represented by Gheorghe Șincai, Petru Maior and Inochentie Micu Klein.¹³⁹ Influenced by the ideas of the German Enlightenment, the Transylvanian School promoted historicism, introducing arguments in favor of the "pure" Latin origin of the Romanians and transforming this idea into a political weapon for altering Transylvania's constitutional framework.¹⁴⁰

Their militant ideology was disseminated in the Principalities as well and directed against the Phanariots. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Transylvanians Gheorghe Lazăr (1779–1823) and Aaron Florian (1805–1887) immigrated to Wallachia and laid the foundations for a comprehensive program of national awakening through education, as founder and, respectively, professor at the prestigious St. Sava National College. Established in 1818 in Bucharest as the first higher education school in the Romanian language, St. Sava College broke with the tradition of Greek scholarship—as represented by the Princely Academies—and aimed instead at introducing a Western-style system of education in the national language. The cultural program initiated by Lazăr and Florian was continued by Wallachian and Moldavian scholars who acted as "apostles" of the national awakening. The most important such figures included Simion Marcovici (1802–1877), Ion Heliade Rădulescu (1802–1872), Nicolae Bălcescu (1819–1852) and Mihail Kogălniceanu (1817–1891). These thinkers introduced new intellectual references in the Principalities, preparing the ground for their cultural reorientation from (modern) Greek to French culture. In line with the Enlightenment's symbolic geography, the Transylvanian School scapegoated the Phanariots as retrograde Oriental elites, portraying them as anti-national elements and as an obstacle to progress;

¹³⁸ Cf. Cantemir, *Descrierea Moldovei*; and *Hronicul Vechimei a Româno-Moldo-Vlahilor*.

¹³⁹ See Paul Cornea, "Contribuția Transilvanei la elaborarea conceptului modern de națiune," in *Originile romantismului românesc* (Bucharest: Minerva, 1972), 470–477.

¹⁴⁰ At the time, Transylvania's political structure was based on the political union of three corporate groups, called "nations" (the Hungarians, the Germans and the Szeklers) and four "received" religions (Catholicism, Lutheranism, Calvinism and Unitarianism). Under this arrangement, Orthodox Romanians were excluded from political rights.

this trend was to culminate in the programmatic writings of the 1848 revolutionaries in the Principalities.

The shift from a Greek-dominated to a pro-Western, anti-Phanariot cultural orientation is best exemplified by the activity of Ion Heliade Rădulescu (1802–1872), a prolific writer, publisher, translator and politician, regarded as the most influential cultural figure of the first half of the nineteenth century in the Principalities. In his childhood, Heliade was introduced to the Greek language and culture by his mother and his private tutor, Alexei. During his training at the Princely Academy in Bucharest (1815–1818), Heliade was heavily influenced by Greek scholarship, providing him with access to classical literature and philosophy but also to recent French literature. Later on, however, Heliade continued his education at St. Sava College, under Lazăr's guidance. Upon Lazăr's departure, Heliade became a teacher at St. Sava College (1822–1827) and continued his professor's program of national regeneration, working assiduously to develop Romanian language and culture through literature, translations and journalism. After the discontinuation of the Princely Academies in Iași and Bucharest in 1821, St. Sava College was reorganized and gradually replaced the former Phanariot Princely Academies as a core institution for training the new intellectual elite.

Under the influence of Lazăr's neo-Kantian philosophy, Heliade devised his own philosophical model, explaining progress through the equilibrium between thesis and antithesis, such as spirit vs. matter, and regression through their confrontation.¹⁴¹ Heliade applied this philosophical principle to interpreting the history of the Romanians, which he regarded, in the spirit of Romantic messianism, as the central axis of world history. He developed a sociological theory of the superiority of the medieval patriarchal society, based on the organic rule of native aristocracy over the peasantry. He argued that the decadence of the glorious Romanian medieval civilization was caused by the conflict between boyars and parvenus (*boieri și ciocoi*), proponents of two opposing doctrines, *boierismul* and *ciocoismul*, equivalent to the principle of good vs. bad, life vs. death, or regeneration vs. degeneration. In this scheme of history, Heliade assigned a special role to Michael the Brave's rule (1594–1601), regarded as the Romanians' most glorious era as well as the beginning of their decadence. Through his military genius, Michael liberated the country from outside

¹⁴¹ Ion Heliade Rădulescu, *Opere*, 2 vols. (Bucharest: Univers Enciclopedic, 2002), vol. 2, 411.

enemies, becoming the symbol of national regeneration and military might. Yet his infamous decree tied peasants to the land and thus surrendered the country's liberties to domestic enemies, the *ciocoi*. Michael's actions destroyed the natural alliance between aristocrats and peasants, facilitating the domination of the parvenus, the *ciocoi*, symbolized mainly by the Ottoman Greek Phanariots.¹⁴² In Heliade's view, the degeneration caused by Michael's reform was overturned only in 1821 by Tudor Vladimirescu, who "started the regeneration of the Romanians" by bringing the Phanariot regime to an end.¹⁴³ This switch in Heliade's orientation illustrates the major rupture that took place in Romanian national ideology around 1821: a man versed in the Greek language and scholarship set one of the cornerstones of the militant Romantic ideology of anti-Phanariotism.

At the political level, it was only after the anti-Ottoman revolt instigated in 1821 by the conspiratorial Greek organization called Philiki Hetaireia that the Greek and Romanian national discourses separated. Philiki Hetaireia took advantage of its influence upon Phanariot princes and used the Principalities as an organizational basis for launching a war for the liberation of Greece. Though it initially collaborated with Philiki Hetaireia, the 1821 Wallachian revolt led by Tudor Vladimirescu took an autonomous, anti-Phanariot orientation, contributing to the demise of that regime. Vladimirescu demanded the restoration of the "ancient rights" of the country, the removal of Phanariot rule and the election of princes from the ranks of local boyars, and comprehensive sociopolitical reforms. Ultimately, the collaboration of the Phanariot princes with Philiki Hetaireia and their anti-Ottoman attitude, coupled with the Wallachian revolt, destabilized the Phanariot regime, compromising its political credibility in the eyes of the sultan. The end of the Phanariot regime finally eliminated the Phanariot princes and their Ottoman clique, creating political conditions for the establishment of a nobility estate regime based on the Polish and Hungarian models. With the restoration of rule by native princes, Ioniță Sandu Sturdza in Moldavia (r. 1822–1828) and Grigore Dimitrie Ghica in Wallachia (r. 1822–1828), the lines of the political conflict were thus redrawn. The main battle over the political reorganization of the two Principalities was no longer fought between the local boyar vs. Istanbul-based Ottoman Greek networks of power. Now it was the dynamic lower and middle strata of the nobility competing against the upper nobility for political

¹⁴² Ibid., 339.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 416.

domination. Although the political tensions between these strata of the nobility were certainly not new, the conflict was greatly amplified by the unprecedented expansion of the nobility in the last decades of Phanariot rule, due mostly to the ennoblement of officeholders and the practice of selling nobility titles.

At the end of Phanariot rule, lower and middle-ranking boyars thus formed large and dynamic social categories. Eager to participate fully in state institutions and to assume a leading political role, in April 1822 they authored a constitutional project proposing the establishment of a constitutional monarchy based on the rule of law and the principle of the separation of powers. The main political aim of the project, influenced as it was by the Italian Carbonari (and thus called *Constituția Cărvunarilor*) and including entire passages from the French *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*, was to abolish the political monopoly of the great boyars by extending its privileges to wider strata of the nobility.

The political inciter and *port-parole* of the lower and middle boyars against the oligarchy of the upper boyars was the Moldavian Ionică Tăutu (1795–1830), an engineer by training but also a talented poet, political thinker and pamphleteer. An ardent supporter of Prince Sturdza, and himself candidate to the throne with the aim of succeeding Sturdza, Tăutu attempted to mobilize the lower and middle boyars to serve as the basis of the new “national” regime -in-the-making. Heavily influenced by Enlightenment ideas, mostly by the French *Encyclopédie* edited by Denis Diderot and by the work of Charles de Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Étienne Bonnot de Condillac and the Italian Physiocrat Gaetano Filangieri,¹⁴⁴ in his political writings Tăutu elaborated a comprehensive program for the sociopolitical transformation of the Principalities. He put forth a vehement critique of Phanariot rule, portraying it as a departure from the local mores of the country, leading to decadence.¹⁴⁵ In response, Tăutu argued for the removal of the Phanariot codes of laws and a return to the customs of the country (*obiceiul pământului*). Tăutu’s main target, however, was the upper nobility, whom he denounced as egoistic and unpatriotic and whom he called upon to act for the common good.¹⁴⁶ Another important dimension of Tăutu’s program was the consolidation of

¹⁴⁴ Emil Vărtosu, “Studiu Introductiv,” in *Ionică Tăutu, 1795–1830*, 71, 77.

¹⁴⁵ See “Plan pentru alcătuirea unei istorii a Moldovei în anii 1821–1822,” in *Ionică Tăutu, 1795–1830*, 100–102.

¹⁴⁶ See “Strigarea norodului Moldovei către boierii priegiți și către mitropolitul,” in *Ionică Tăutu, 1795–1830. Scrieri social-politice*, 79–92.

the Principalities' internal autonomy, through the adoption of a comprehensive citizenship legislation by which to regulate the status of foreigners. To counter immigration, Tăutu proposed the creation of an internal police to monitor the status of foreign residents (such as the *sudiți*) and to deport those without profession or means of existence.¹⁴⁷

Tăutu's influential writings planted the first seeds of the modern doctrine of citizenship in the Principalities. Rejecting both despotism and oligarchy, Tăutu promoted the principle of constitutionalism as a legal guarantee against the upper aristocracy's monopoly over rights of political representation but also against the autocratic powers of the prince, coupled with forms of withholding citizenship from certain categories of unwanted immigrants. In Moldavian political life, Tăutu's reform program was nevertheless successfully opposed by a faction of the upper nobility grouped around Mihail Sturdza (r. 1834–1849), who was able to impose its view on society.

The restoration of the citizenship regime of nobility estates was ultimately embedded in the Organic Statutes, the first constitutions of the Principalities adopted under the temporary Russian occupation of the Principalities (1828–1834), following the Russo-Turkish War of 1828–1829. The Statutes were compiled by two separate commissions of great boyars in Moldavia and Wallachia under the close supervision of the Russian governor of the Principalities, General Pavel Kisselef. Implemented on July 1, 1831, in Wallachia and on January 1, 1832, in Moldavia, the Statutes consolidated the autonomous state-citizenship of the two Principalities. They set formal naturalization rules, more sharply distinguished citizens from foreigners, forbade dual citizenship, established statistical records on the inhabitants for tax purposes and introduced a stricter system for checking foreigners.¹⁴⁸

The Statutes specified in detail the inhabitants' citizenship rights and duties, under the generic name of *drit de pământean* (the right of the natives). In order to curtail the unchecked access of Ottoman Greeks to nobility status and positions, the Organic Statutes instituted a two-tier system of naturalization, a legal practice that emulated the distinction

¹⁴⁷ "Obștea boierilor Moldovei dă chezășia cerută de Marele Vizir pentru siguranța ostașilor și a neguțătorilor turci din Moldova, dar cere dreptul de a alcătui o armată națională pentru paza granițelor și poliția interioară," *Ionică Tăutu, 1795–1830*, 145–147.

¹⁴⁸ *Regulamentele organice ale Valahiei și Moldovei, Vol. 1: Textele puse în aplicare la 1 iulie 1831 în Valahia și la 1 ianuarie 1832 în Moldova* (Bucharest: Intreprinderile Eusebiu, 1944).

that existed in France between the *petite* (narrow) and *grand* (broad) *naturalization*. Similarly, in the Principalities there was an inclusive narrow naturalization that conferred full residential but no political rights to all foreigners who decided to establish their domicile in the Principalities. There was also a more exclusive broad naturalization that granted residential as well as political rights and was therefore closely monitored by the parliament, since it allowed potential access to the ruling elite in Moldavia and Wallachia. In this way, the Principalities continued to absorb immigrants from abroad, but strictly controlled their access to political rights.

The Statutes also reorganized the political life of the two Principalities, replacing the former irregular estate assembly with two representative assemblies: an ordinary one, to function as a legislative body, and an enlarged—exceptional—one, for the election of the prince. In both Principalities, voters and deputies had to be at least thirty years of age, boyars and sons of boyars, and local inhabitants, or naturalized and permanent residents in the country. These electoral stipulations added a participatory dimension to citizenship, by granting political rights to boyars of all ranks (*tagma boerilor*). At the same time, they also endorsed the political monopoly of the aristocracy; their rights and privileges constituted the essence of the new political order. Nobility status granted 1) tax privileges, 2) access to state offices and landed property and 3) rights to political participation in the newly created political institutions. In order to shelter these privileges and to prevent the growth of the nobility, access to ennoblement was severely controlled. It was possible only through ennoblement by the prince, with the explicit approval of the Ordinary Assembly. At the same time, the nobility was recorded statistically, nobility ranks were once again hierarchically organized in a ranking catalogue called the *Arhondologie*, and a sharp distinction was implemented between boyars “of office” and those “of blood.”¹⁴⁹

These political changes reflected the interests of the local upper nobility, who imposed its view on the new organization of the Principalities. True, the Statutes assured lower boyars a certain political visibility and allowed a feeble presence of urban elements. Despite its apparent liberalism, political representation was in fact proportionally regulated, accord-

¹⁴⁹ See Constantin Sion, *Arhondologia Moldovei; amintiri și note contemporane de Paharnicul Constantin Sion* (Iași: Tipografia Buciumului român, 1892).

ing to strict hierarchical criteria. Both assemblies were dominated by great boyars, who were over-represented. The Statutes thus instituted an oligarchic system: political life was dominated by a narrow group of about 500 people, who were in turn effectively controlled by twenty powerful families.¹⁵⁰ Although largely unanswered, the demands of the lower and middle-ranking boyars nevertheless had a strong impact on the political life of the Principalities, preparing the ground for the 1848 revolutionary uprising.

11. *Anti-Phanar after Phanar:*
The "Greek Question" in the Post-1821 Period

With the end of Phanariot rule in the Principalities and the political victory of the local great nobility, the "Greek question" lost its most acute political implications. Yet the return to rule by native princes in 1821 did not end the "anti-Greek discourse" but actually amplified it in many ways. Phanariot rule was followed by an era dominated politically by a Romantic nationalist movement of "regeneration." Its program stigmatized Phanariot rule as a period of decline and degeneration at the hands of foreign exploiters and aimed to dismantle Phanariot power networks and reduce Greek influence in the Principalities. As shown above, the anti-Greek discourse had a long tradition in the Principalities' political life. It was first advanced in chronicles at the beginning of the seventeenth century, when the conflict stirred up by the significant "infiltration" of the Ottoman Greeks into the ruling elites of the Principalities degenerated into violent anti-Greek riots, accompanied by legal measures to close out these "unwanted foreigners." Paradoxically, however, the anti-Greek discourse reached a peak *after* the end of Phanariot rule, when it metamorphosed into an all encompassing anti-Phanariot discourse and became a major aspect of the ideological struggle against the old regime waged in the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

Defined as a fight to remove the multifaceted and still palpable legacy of the "Phanariot yoke" in the Principalities, anti-Phanariotism was fueled by three main discursive patterns, put forward by 1) Western travelers in

¹⁵⁰ Ioan C. Filitti, *Izvoarele constituției de la 1866* (Bucharest: Universul, 1934), 8, 11. For a critique of the political rights granted by the Organic Statutes, see Brătianu, "Organizarea regimului de stări prin Regulamentul Organic," in *Sfatul domnesc*, 251–282.

the Principalities, who, animated by a critical yet often “colonialist” perspective on the Ottoman Empire, were first to use the term “Phanariot,” with mainly negative connotations; 2) Romantic nationalist ideologues, who articulated visions of an ethnically homogeneous national community and denounced the Phanariots as the main agents of the cosmopolitan, non-national order of the old regime; and 3) representatives of the lower nobility who felt hampered in their efforts to achieve upward social mobility and channeled their sociopolitical grievances against the Phanariots’ entourage settled in the Principalities.

Western travelers or temporary residents in the Principalities were first to use the term “Phanariot” with mainly negative connotations. In general, they were attracted by the exotic, cosmopolitan character of the Phanariots. At the same time, they condemned them almost unanimously, from an “Orientalist” perspective, as despots and tools of the sultan’s oppression of the Principalities.¹⁵¹ In Wallachia we find an early sample of anti-Greek hostility in the work of Anton Maria Del Chiaro, Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu’s Florentine secretary. In *Istoria Delle Moderne Rivoluzioni Della Valachia*, published in 1718 in Venice, just as Phanariot rule was being established in the Principalities, Del Chiaro accused the Constantinople Greeks of having a “detrimental” role with regard to Wallachia.¹⁵² His views were later invoked by a leader of the local party in Wallachia, Șerban Cantacuzino¹⁵³ and were later cited in anti-Phanariot Romantic historical works.¹⁵⁴ In the second half of the eighteenth century, travelers

¹⁵¹ On Orientalism, defined as a power discourse that appropriates the normative categories of progress and modernity for Western Europe and contrasts it to the alleged backwardness and irrationality of the Orient, see Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979). On “Occidentalism” as a counterpart of Orientalism, succinctly defined as “stylized images of the West,” see James G. Carrier, ed., *Occidentalism: Images of the West* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

¹⁵² Antonio Maria Del Chiaro, *Istoria Delle Moderne Rivoluzioni Della Valachia: Con La Descrizione Del Paese; Natura, Costumi, Riti, E Religione Degli Abitanti; Annessavi La Tavola Topografica Di Quella Provincia, Dove Si Vede Ciò, Che Èr stato Nella Valachia Agli Austriaci Nel Congresso Di Passarovitza* (Venice: Per Antonio Bortoli, 1718). In Romania, Del Chiaro’s work was first published in Italian by Nicolae Iorga (Bucharest, 1914) (for the above quotation, see p. 193), and then in Romanian translation: *Revoluțiile Valahiei* (Iași: Viața Românească, 1929).

¹⁵³ See Iorga, “Prefață,” in Del Chiaro, *Revoluțiile Valahiei*, 3. For Cantacuzino’s relations to Del Chiaro, see also Virgil Căndea, *Stolnicul între contemporani* (Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1971).

¹⁵⁴ See Jean Vaillant, *La Roumanie ou Histoire, Langue, Littérature, Orographie, Statistique des peuples de la langue d’or, Ardialiens, Vallaques et Moldaves, résumés sous le nom de Romans*, 2 vols. (Paris: Arthus Bertrand, 1844), vol. 2, 156.

such as de Peyssonnel,¹⁵⁵ Jean Luis Carra,¹⁵⁶ Josèphe Boscovich¹⁵⁷ and Domenico Sostini¹⁵⁸ criticized the role played by the Phanariot princes in the Principalities.¹⁵⁹ The term "Phanariot" as a negative group label was first employed in German by the Saxon doctor Andreas Wolf,¹⁶⁰ while the British consul W. Wilkinson was the first to speak of the "*political system* instituted by the Greeks in the Principalities," which he unambiguously condemned as a system of bribery, intrigue and spoliation.¹⁶¹ One of the most vitriolic and highly influential anti-Phanariot pamphlets was authored by Markos Philippos Zallonis, a doctor of Greek origin who actually worked for the Phanariots in the Principalities. Devoted to the Greek national cause, Zallonis differentiated between the virtuous Greek nation in general and the Phanariot clique. Based on his experience and intimate knowledge of the latter, he warned the former to purge the nascent modern Greece of Phanariot influences.¹⁶² Zallonis's work influenced the critical attitude of French historians writing on the Phanariots, most notably Elias Regnault and Jean Vaillant.¹⁶³

In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the term "Phanariot" and its negative connotations were transferred from French sources, mostly Zallonis, to the Principalities, replacing the more general label *greci țarigrădeni și roumelioți*. In their effort to legitimize their project of Western-style modernization of the Principalities, in the post-1821 period, a new generation of politicians demonized the "Old" Phanariot regime as

¹⁵⁵ De Peyssonnel, *Observations Historiques Et Géographiques Sur Les Peuples Barbares Qui Ont Habité Les Bords Du Danube Et Du Pont-Euxin*, Par M. De Peyssonnel (Paris: Tilliard, 1765).

¹⁵⁶ Jean Luis Carra, *Histoire de La Moldavie et de La Valachie. Avec une dissertation sur L'état actuel de ces deux provinces* (Jassy: Aux dépens de la Société typographique des Deux-Ponts, 1777).

¹⁵⁷ Josèphe Boscovich, *Reise von Constantinopel durch Romanien, Bulgarien und die Moldau nach Lemberg in Pohlen* (Leipzig: Leipzig Breitkopf, 1779).

¹⁵⁸ Domenico Sestini, *Viaggio da Constantinopoli a Bukarest, fatto l'anno 1779* (Rome: Per A. Fulgoni, 1794).

¹⁵⁹ For an informative general survey, see Traian Ionescu-Nișcov, "L'époque phanariote dans l'historiographie roumaine et étrangère," *Symposium L'époque phanariote*, 145–157.

¹⁶⁰ Andreas Wolf, *Beiträge Zu Einer Statistisch-Historischen Beschreibung Des Fürstenthums Moldau* (Hermannstadt: Hochmeister, 1805).

¹⁶¹ Wilkinson, *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia*, 44, 98.

¹⁶² See his work published under the name Marc-Philippe Zallony, *Traité sur les Fanariotes, où l'on voit les causes primitives de leur élévation aux hospodariats de la Valachie et de la Moldavie, leur mode d'administration, et les causes principales de leur chute; suivi de quelques réflexions sur l'état actuel de la Grèce* (Marseille: De l'imprimerie Antoine Ricard, 1824), 341.

¹⁶³ Cf. Elias Regnault, *Histoire politique et sociale des Principautés danubiennes* (Paris: Paulin et Le Chevalier, 1855); and Vaillant, *La Roumanie ou Histoire, Langue, Littérature, Orographie*.

an era of Oriental despotism. They also scapegoated the Byzantine/Ottoman legacy as the main source of backwardness, arguing for a clear distinction between tradition and modernization, according to the rhetorical dialectic of Orientalism vs. Occidentalism.

The first devastating critique of the Phanariots was advanced, as previously mentioned, by the lower boyar Ionică Tăutu, who accused them and their clientele of a lack of patriotism and respect for the interests and mores of the native population in the Principalities. To expose the harmful impact of the Greeks on the development of Moldavia and Wallachia, Tăutu planned to write a history of Moldavia, covering the years 1821–1822. This work was to include “a short history of Greeks” and to prove “the capricious and restless nature of their nation” and “the injustice it caused” during the time, as also illustrated by their efforts to monopolize power in the Principalities and their “crude” behavior during the events of 1821–1822.¹⁶⁴

The most representative figures of this historiographical trend were the historians and revolutionary activists Mihail Kogălniceanu and Nicolae Bălcescu, the main ideologues of Romantic nationalism in the first half of the nineteenth century in Moldavia and Wallachia, respectively. In the first modern synthesis on the history of the Principalities, published in 1837, Mihail Kogălniceanu singled out Phanariot rule for the first time as a distinct historical era, marked by tyranny and continuous decadence. Kogălniceanu argued that “Phanariot despotism” was an obstacle to modern development: “stronger than the Great Wall of China,” it isolated the Principalities from the larger European trends, crushing “all attempts at independence and at [consolidating the] nationality.”¹⁶⁵ For his part, in his 1846 essay “Românii și Fanarioții” (The Romanians and the Phanariots), Nicolae Bălcescu provided a full dossier of the “Greek question,” describing in detail the “two-century-long fight between the natives and the Phanariots” and blaming the latter for the political and military decline and the de-nationalization of the two Principalities.¹⁶⁶ While condemning the ill-fated role played by the Phanariots in the history of

¹⁶⁴ See “Plan pentru alcătuirea unei istorii a Moldovei în anii 1821–1822,” in Ionică Tăutu, 1795–1830, 100–102.

¹⁶⁵ Mihail Kogălniceanu, *Histoire de la Valachie, de la Moldavie, et des Vlaques transdanubiens, Tome Premier: Histoire de la Dacie, des Vlaques transdanubiens, et de la Valachie (1241–1792)* (Berlin: Librairie B. Behr, 1837), 371–372. A new, expanded edition was published in Berlin in 1854.

¹⁶⁶ Bălcescu, *Magazin istoric pentru Dacia*, vol. 1, 111–121; reprinted in Bălcescu, *Opere*, vol. 1, part 1, 118–123.

Moldavia and Wallachia, Bălcescu provided nevertheless a more balanced evaluation of their rule. In addition, Bălcescu differentiated between the Phanariot Greeks from Rumelia and Istanbul and "the vigorous Greek nation," which "is distinct from the Phanariots, whom she herself [the Greek nation] hates and excludes from her own ranks."¹⁶⁷ These two related yet distinct interpretations shaped the perception of Romanian historiography on the Phanariot era: Kogălniceanu's harsher criticism was followed by Ion Heliade Rădulescu and Vasile Maniu, among others, while Bălcescu's more moderate evaluation resonated with the interpretation put forward by A. Treboniu Laurian.¹⁶⁸

The anti-Phanariot discourse was not an abstract historiographical exercise but had palpable political implications. The stigmatization of Phanariot rule as an era of Oriental despotism marked by the denationalization of Moldavia and Wallachia further legitimized the political campaign of Westernization of the Principalities through the creation of a modern, secular nation-state. Once in power, these nationalist thinkers and revolutionary activists, most notably Kogălniceanu, took additional steps toward dismantling the legacy of the Greek-Phanariot 'complex', mostly in church-state affairs.

12. *Nationalizing the Orthodox Church: The Secularization of the Property of the Dedicated Monasteries*

One of the last contentious issues pertaining to the "Greek question" that outlasted Phanariot rule was the legal status and property of the dedicated monasteries (*mănăstiri închinat*e) in the Principalities. As mentioned before, the practice of dedicating monasteries to the Patriarchy in Istanbul, Mount Athos or to holy places in the Near East spread in the Principalities after the fall of Constantinople (1453) and thus preceded the emergence of the "Greek question." During the Phanariot rule, however, this practice proliferated to such an extent that it acquired wide social and political connotations; although the controversy surrounding the status of the dedicated monasteries predated Phanariot rule, in the second quarter

¹⁶⁷ Bălcescu, *Magazin istoric pentru Dacia*, vol. 1, 119.

¹⁶⁸ See Ion Heliade Rădulescu, *Prescurtare de istoria românilor sau Dacia și România* (Bucharest: Typographia Heliade și Asociații, 1861); A. Treboniu-Laurian, *Istoria Românilor* (Bucharest: Tipografia Națională, 1869), vol 1–3, 3rd ed., and *Elemente de istoria românilor: pentru clasele primare* (Bucharest: Imprimeria Statului, 1870). For this argument, see Ionescu-Nișcov, "L'époque phanariote dans l'historiographie roumaine et étrangère," 152–153.

of the eighteenth century the issue was nevertheless treated as part and parcel of the larger Phanariot question, in political speeches Greek clerics being indiscriminately referred to as "Phanariots."

The fight against the irregular status of dedicated monasteries was initiated by Michael the Brave at the end of the sixteenth century and continued in the seventeenth century, when—as part of the anti-Greek legal campaigns—numerous local princes initiated measures meant to reduce the number and regularize the status of dedicated monasteries. The most important initiatives in this respect belonged to the Wallachia prince Matei Basarab and the Moldavian prince Dimitrie Cantemir. However, these measures were never fully implemented. Moreover, during Phanariot rule, dedicated monasteries received additional privileges, which further increased their irregular status. Abolishing the subordination of the dedicated monasteries became an important component of the program of "national emancipation," which was constantly on the agenda of the boyars' diplomatic notes sent to the Great Powers in the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, figuring prominently in their plans of internal reorganization of the Principalities.

Surprisingly, however, the first example of "nationalizing" the Orthodox Commonwealth involved Russia against the Patriarchy of Constantinople.¹⁶⁹ As is well-known, by virtue of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774), Russia claimed the right to protect the Orthodox Church and the Orthodox believers living in the Ottoman Empire and to represent and defend their interests in their relation to the Ottoman authorities. At the end of the eighteenth century, in the context of Russia's westward expansion, the imperial authorities started a campaign meant to subordinate the Orthodox Church in the newly annexed territories to the Russian Holy Synod. In support of this campaign, Russian authorities attracted numerous Greek prelates who held important positions in the administration of the Ecumenical Patriarchate but agreed to relocate to Russia and work under Russian imperial patronage.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ Stephen K. Batalden, "Metropolitan Gavriil (Banulesko-Bodoni) and Greek-Russian Conflict over Dedicated Monastic Estates, 1787–1812," *Church History* 52, no. 4 (December 1983): 468–478.

¹⁷⁰ Examples include, in addition to the Moldavian Metropolitan Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni, the Greek clerics Nikiphoros Theotokis and Eugenios Voulgaris and the Serb Sofronije Mladenović. See Batalden, "Metropolitan Gavriil (Banulesko-Bodoni)," 477–478. On the flight of Greek prelates to Russia, especially at the end of the 1768–1774 Russo-Turkish War, see S.K. Batalden, "A Further Note on Patriarch Serapheim II's Sojourn to Russia," *Balkan Studies* 18 (1977), 411.

In its first phase, Russia's campaign affected the Orthodox churches and monasteries in the partitioned Polish territories. In February 1792, following the military occupation of Moldavia and Wallachia, Catherine II and the Russian Holy Synod in St. Petersburg appointed Archbishop Amvrosiy Serebrennikov of Ekaterinoslav as exarch (*locum tenens*) of "Moldo-Vlachia" with jurisdiction over the two Principalities. Soon after the signing of the Iași Peace Treaty (which ended the Russo-Turkish War of 1787–1792), Serebrennikov appointed Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni, a Hellenized Moldavian cleric, as metropolitan of the Orthodox Church in Moldavia. This appointment was vehemently opposed by the Patriarch of Constantinople Neophytos VII, since it violated the Patriarchy's exclusive authority over the Church in the Principalities. With the return of the Ottoman administration over Moldavia and Wallachia in June 1792, Bănulescu-Bodoni was not only dismissed from office but also arrested and imprisoned in Constantinople; he was released only after strong Russian diplomatic pressure.¹⁷¹

The incident was repeated again in 1808 when, following the Russian occupation of the Principalities during the Russo-Turkish War of 1806–1812, Russia appointed Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni exarch of the two Principalities. In this capacity, Bănulescu-Bodoni initiated a series of administrative reforms meant to regularize the local Church administration but to also subject it to the authority of the Russian Holy Synod. This campaign earned Bănulescu-Bodoni the support of the local clergy but placed him in conflict with the Greek hierarchy in the Principalities, which culminated with an "uprising" of the Greek abbots in 1810–1811. The legal-administrative status of dedicated monasteries became the most important issue of contention in this conflict. In line with the imperial policy applied in the Polish territories, Gavril intended to end the independent *stauropegial* status of the dedicated monasteries and to bring their monastic holdings under the administration of the Russian church. In response to this policy, the Greek *egumeni* drafted a letter of protest to Tsar Alexander I and the Russian Holy Synod in defense of their "rights and privileges."¹⁷² The Greek monks' demand to have their independent status restored was, however, rejected by the Russian Holy Synod, which instead decreed in December 1808 that all *egumeni* of the dedicated monasteries in Moldavia and Wallachia had to be subordinated to the exarch of Moldo-Vlachia.

¹⁷¹ Batalden, "Metropolitan Gavriil (Banulesko-Bodoni)," 471–473.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 475.

The Greek clerics reacted by appealing to other Great Powers for help, thus internationalizing the conflict. Responding to the appeal of the Greek *egumeni*, the French consul in Bucharest, Ledoux, granted French diplomatic protection to the Greek hierarchs, thus providing them with diplomatic immunity in their relation to the authorities of the two Principalities.¹⁷³ Unimpressed by this act, in December 1810, the Russian Holy Synod issued a decree authorizing Gavriil to remove the rebellious Greek monastic leaders from their positions; seven Greek hierarchs were subsequently arrested by mid-1811 and dispatched to Russia.¹⁷⁴

In May 1812 the Bucharest Peace Treaty ended the Russo-Turkish War and restored the Principalities to Ottoman (and Phanariot) rule, with the exception of Bessarabia, the province situated between the rivers Prut and Dniester that was detached from Moldavia and annexed by Russia. Under the terms of the peace treaty, the Greek hierarchs arrested by Gavriil were reinstated to their former monasteries. But the new legal status of the dedicated monasteries imposed by Gavriil was nevertheless preserved in Bessarabia; the dedicated monasteries in Russia's newly occupied territory were consequently subordinated to the Russian Holy Synod, thus ending their *stauropegial* status. Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni, the initiator of this reform, was appointed Metropolitan of Bessarabia under the authority of the Russian Church, with its see in Chişinău, and served in this capacity until his death in 1821.

Although justified by imperial policy considerations and legitimized by the doctrine of the "Third Rome," Russia's campaign of subordinating the Orthodox Church to its own ecclesiastical authorities established a precedent within the Orthodox commonwealth. After these brief diplomatic conflicts with the Patriarchy in Istanbul, Russia resumed its policy of support and collaboration with the Orthodox Church and defended the interest of the Greek monks in their relation to Ottoman or local authorities in the Principalities. Its example, however, inspired separatist church movements in Moldavia and Wallachia and later in Bulgaria and Serbia. Thus, soon after the abolition of Phanariot rule in 1821, the Wallachian princes Barbu Ştirbei and George Bibescu issued diplomatic notes asking Russia and the Great Powers to regularize the status of the dedicated

¹⁷³ Arseniy Stadnitskiy, *Gavriil Banulesko-Bodoni: Ekzarh Moldo-vlahiyskiy, 1808–1812 gg., i Mitropolit Kishinevskiy, 1813–1821 gg.* (Kishinev, 1894), 227–231, cited in Batalden, "Metropolitan Gavriil (Banulesko-Bodoni)," 476.

¹⁷⁴ Stadnitskiy, *Gavriil Banulesko-Bodoni*, 240–241, cited in Batalden, "Metropolitan Gavriil (Banulesko-Bodoni)," 475.

monasteries. Aware of the sensitive international legal and political ramifications of the status of the dedicated monasteries, Russia postponed the resolution of this issue *sine die*. The question of the dedicated monasteries was finally addressed by the Congress of Paris following the Crimean War (1853–1856). Since the Great Powers could not agree on a concrete solution, the protocol of the conference asked the authorities of the two Principalities to establish, along with the representatives of the dedicated monasteries, a common commission tasked with arriving at a negotiated compromise.

The question was discussed at length in the ad-hoc *divan* of Moldavia, the representative assemblies convoked under the terms of the 1856 Treaty to decide on the union and internal organization of the Principalities. Following the stipulations of the 1856 Paris Peace Treaty and the recommendations of the ad-hoc *divan*, soon after the 1859 personal union of the two Principalities under the rule of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, the governments of Moldavia and Wallachia initiated a joint commission made up of representatives of the Romanian state, the Patriarchy of Constantinople and the dedicated monasteries. The Romanian delegation, however, never fully participated in the commission's deliberation. It became apparent that, while pretending to formally fulfill the Treaty's requirement, the Romanian state actually wanted to prevent a negotiated solution, hoping instead to implement its own policy on the issue. In response to regular protests by the Greek clerics and the Patriarch in Constantinople, Ottoman authorities and the guaranteeing Great Powers pressed the Romanian government to agree to the establishment of an international arbitrage commission. Tactically, the Romanian government did not answer this initiative either; instead, it engaged in a series of unilateral measures meant *de facto* to settle the issue in accord with its interest. To this end, the government named its own commission to study the status and property of dedicated monasteries, which unsurprisingly was boycotted by the Greek clerics. In addition, the Romanian government declared the estates of the dedicated monasteries government property, asked them to hold mass in the Romanian language, and seized their mobile property.¹⁷⁵

These measures culminated with the law on the secularization of the property of monasteries adopted by the Romanian parliament on

¹⁷⁵ G.A. Mano, *Des Interests religieux de L'Orient au sujet des biens conventuels dans les Principautés Unies avec une annexe* (Paris: Chez Amyot, 1864). See also Ioan Brezoianu, *Mănăstirile zise închinăte și călugării străini* (Bucharest: Tipografia colegiului. Sf. Sava, 1861).

December 13/25, 1863, and sanctioned by Princely Decree no. 1251.¹⁷⁶ Under the terms of the law, the property of all monasteries in Romania, including the dedicated monasteries, were perpetually declared state property. The dedicated monasteries controlled 11.14 percent of arable land in Wallachia and 12.16 percent in Moldavia. If we add to this the landed estates possessed by the other, regular monasteries, about 16.55 percent in the former and 10.17 percent in the latter, respectively, it becomes apparent that the church controlled about one quarter of the land in each principality.¹⁷⁷ The state thus nationalized an important part of the country's landed property, in the preparation of the general agrarian reform.

In order to weaken foreign resistance to the law, in August 1863 Cuza offered financial compensation to the Orthodox Church for the secularization act. Article III of the law established a fund of 81 million lei for the dedicated monasteries, not as compensation but "as help [*cu titlul de ajutor*] in accord with the purpose of the original act of dedication." This sum included the dedicated monasteries' debts to the Romanian state in the value of 31 million lei, which was to be thus subtracted from the liquid compensation granted to the foreign monasteries. The money was to be used exclusively for the reparation of the Orthodox churches abroad, the beneficiaries being obliged to fully and transparently account for their expenses. The Patriarch of Constantinople Sophronius III (1863–1866) refused to accept this compensation. Fearing that negotiation with the Romanian state would imply recognition of the Romanian state's right to unilaterally settle the issue, Sophronius III preferred to pressure the Great Powers for an externally imposed diplomatic solution to the issue.

The law on secularization triggered international protests from the Orthodox Patriarchy in Istanbul, supported by the Ottoman authorities and by Russia, but also by England and Austria.¹⁷⁸ The main issues of contention were the legal status of the dedicated monasteries and, closely connected to that, the legal status of the Greek monks in Romania. What was the legal status of the dedicated monasteries? What was the legal meaning of the word *închinat* (dedicated)? Did patron monasteries have property rights over their client monasteries in the Principalities? The

¹⁷⁶ Mano, *Des Interests religieux de L'Orient*.

¹⁷⁷ Paul E. Michelson, *Romanian Politics, 1859–1871: From Prince Cuza to Prince Carol* (Iași: Centrul de Studii Românești, 1998).

¹⁷⁸ For an informative overview of this international crisis, with a focus on the actions of the Romanian government, see Constantin C. Giurescu, *Viața și opera lui Cuza Vodă* (Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1966), 193–244.

main parties in the conflict, the Orthodox Church and Greek monks on the one hand, and the Romanian state on the other hand, employed two competing logics: one in the spirit of the Byzantine-cum-Ottoman imperial order and the other in the spirit of the new legal order of a quasi-sovereign nation-state. The pamphlets authored by Greek monks and the Orthodox Patriarch portrayed Cuza's act of secularization as a violation of Ottoman sovereignty and an infringement on the Church's ancient privileges and property rights. In their view, by virtue of the Byzantine tradition and canon law, the Orthodox Church had inalienable property rights in the Principalities and could not be treated as a foreign institution. For its part, the Romanian state argued that, by the act of *închinare* (dedication), the dedicated monasteries did not enter into their patrons' possession but only conferred on them the right of financial usufruct under certain conditions. The original bilateral contractual obligations had been abused, however, by the Greek monks, thus rendering them nil. In addition, the Romanian state emphasized that the landed estates of the monasteries could not be regarded as the property of the Greek monks, since, according to Romanian laws, foreigners could not possess landed estates in Romania.¹⁷⁹

Due to the radically different stances the two parties took in the debate, no consensual diplomatic resolution to the issue of the dedicated monasteries could be found. In the face of the Patriarchy's refusal to accept its solution, the Romanian parliament eventually withdrew its financial offer, and ultimately no compensation was paid to the Greek *egumeni* or the patron monasteries.¹⁸⁰ With the secularization of the property of the dedicated monasteries, one of the last vestiges of the pre-national Byzantine commonwealth in Southeastern Europe came to an end. The process of nationalizing the Church was completed in 1872, when the two Metropolitan churches of Moldavia and Wallachia merged into a single Romanian Orthodox Church led by its own Holy Synod. The autocephaly of the Romanian Orthodox Church was proclaimed in 1884 and recognized by the Patriarchy of Constantinople in 1885.

¹⁷⁹ See *Quelques mots sur la secularisation des biens conventuels en Roumanie, par un député Roumain* (Paris: Imprimerie de Jouaust et Fils, 1864), a polemical response to the Greek pamphlet *La vérité sur la question de la couvent dédiée*.

¹⁸⁰ Keith Hitchins, *The Romanians, 1774–1866*, 313–314.

13. *From a High-Status Imperial Minority to Kin-Minority Abroad:
The Greek Minority in Modern Romania*

The return to the rule of the native princes in the Principalities in 1821, and the creation of an autonomous and—since 1830—-independent Greek nation-state, had far-reaching implications. This process gradually placed modern Romanian-Greek relations on a new basis; the most important issues in relations between the two states became the status of Greeks in Romania but also the status of the Romanian minorities in Greece.¹⁸¹

First, the end of the cosmopolitan Ottoman order and the creation of independent Romanian and Greek nation-states forced the Phanariot families to define their loyalties and to either take sides or split into Romanian and Greek branches. Many Phanariot princes as well as their clientele settled in the Principalities and managed to integrate well into the local aristocracy, mostly through marriage alliances.¹⁸² Although the genealogy of the Phanariots and their assimilation into the Romanian aristocracy and society at large has not been subject to systematic research, partial analyses point to the fact that numerous Ottoman Greeks of Phanariot extraction penetrated the *boyar* class.¹⁸³ The most illustrious examples include the Ventura family;¹⁸⁴ the liberal politician Mihail G. Orleanu

¹⁸¹ On the history and status of the Greek minority in Romania, see Cornelia Papacostea-Danielopolu: "Les Cours de Grec des écoles Roumaines après 1821 (1821–1866)," *Revue des Etudes Sud-Est Européennes* 9 (1971), no. 1, 71–90; "La vie culturelle des communautés grecques de Roumanie dans la seconde moitié du XIX^e siècle," *Revue des Etudes Sud-Est Européennes* 7 (1969), no. 3: 475–493; and *Comunitățile Grecești din România în secolul al XIX-lea* (Bucharest: Omonia, 1996). For general overviews, see Olga Cicanci, *Presa de limba greacă din România în veacul al XIX-lea* (Bucharest: Omonia, 1995); Leonidas Rados, "Greci și români în secolul XIX. Aspecte identitare," *Xenopoliana* 9 (2000), nos. 1–4: 73–83; Leonidas Rados, ed., *Interferențe româno-elene (secolele XV–XX)* (Iași: Fundația Academică A.D. Xenopol, 2003); Stelian Brezeanu et al., *Relațiile româno-elene. O istorie cronologică* (Bucharest: Omonia, 2003); Paula Scalcău, *Grecii din România*, 2nd revised ed. (Bucharest: Omonia, 2005). On the diplomatic relations between Romania and Greece, see C. Velichi, "Les relations roumano-grecques pendant la période 1879–1911," *Revue des Etudes Sud-Est Européennes* 7 (1969), no. 3: 522–528.

¹⁸² On the pattern of marriages between the daughters of Romanian boyars and Greek emigrants in the Principalities as mutually beneficial matrimonial alliances, see François Recordon, *Lettres sur la Valachie* (Paris: Lecoq et Durey, 1821), 112–114. Recordon pointed out that the often impoverished Greek students from the princely academies in the Principalities acted as pretenders (*prétendants*) for the hands of local boyars' daughters. On this point, see also Drake-Francis, *The Making of Modern Romanian Culture*.

¹⁸³ Mihai Sorin Rădulescu, "Sur l'aristocratie roumaine de l'entre-deux-guerres," *New Europe College Yearbook* 1 (1996–1997), 339–365.

¹⁸⁴ Mihail Dimitri Sturdza, *Grandes familles de Grèce, d'Albanie et de Constantinople. Dictionnaire historique et généalogique* (Paris: M.-D. Sturdza, 1983).

(1859–1942), former minister and president of the Chamber of Deputies; the Plaginos and the Aristarchis; or General Gheorghe Mano (1833–1911) an influential member of the Conservative Party, scion of the *caimacam* (provincial governor) Ioan Mano and his wife Ana, born Ghika. Other off-spring of Phanariot families became prominent in post-Ottoman political life in Greece, such as branches of the Soutzo or the Mano families who produced several grand dignitaries of the Patriarchy of Constantinople. Alexander Mavrocordatos (1791–1865), former mare *postelnic* (great chamberlain) in Wallachia, the son of Nicolae Mavrocordat and the nephew of Ion Caragea, was president of Greece's 1822 national assembly, minister of finance (1832), held numerous ambassadorial posts and served several times as prime minister (1833–1834, 1841, 1843–1844 and 1854–1855).¹⁸⁵

Second, after the creation of the Greek nation-state, the patterns of Greek migration in the Principalities changed considerably. Attracted by the new economic and political opportunities opened up by the liberation of Greece, many members of the Greek diaspora in the Principalities relocated to the nascent state. At the same time, the opening of navigation on the Danube and the Black Sea and the lifting of the Ottoman monopoly on the external trade of the Principalities in 1829 attracted numerous Greek merchants, entrepreneurs and workers. The Greek communities in the Danubian ports of Brăila and Galați and the seaports of Sulina and Constanța became very prosperous and were able to maintain important cultural institutions, such as their own schools and a flourishing press.¹⁸⁶ At the same time, the status of the Greeks in Romania was redefined from a privileged Ottoman imperial interest group to an ethnic kin-minority of a neighboring nation-state. Starting in 1835 Greece established consulates in many Romanian cities—including not only Iași and Bucharest but also Brăila and Galați—and monitored closely the status and activity of the Greek diaspora in the Principalities. In 1860, upon the union of the two Principalities, the Greek community organized itself as a legally recognized association.

After the proclamation of Romanian independence in 1879, interstate relations between Greece and Romania underwent several crises occasioned by property litigations or by the status of ethnic Romanians in Greece or in other Greek-dominated provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

¹⁸⁵ Lazăr, *Cărturari greci*, 37.

¹⁸⁶ Leonidas Rados, ed., *Școlile grecești în România (1857–1905). Restituții documentare* [Greek schools in Romania (1857–1905): Documents] (Bucharest: Omonia: 2006).

As part of the redefinition of its foreign policy to correspond to its new international status and national goals, Romania initiated an active cultural policy toward kin-minorities abroad, in Transylvania and the Banat, but also in the Balkans. The most active supporter of Romania's ethnic policy in the Balkans was Liga Culturală a Românilor and its newspaper *Românismul*. Involving prominent cultural personalities such as Vasile Pîrvan, George Vîlsan, Pericle Papahagi, Gheorghe Bogdan-Duică, Virgil Arion and Bogdan Ştefanescu-Delavrancea, Liga was concerned with the status of the Romanian ethnic minority in the Balkans and aimed to "draw the attention of domestic and international public opinion to their situation."¹⁸⁷ To this end, Liga worked in close collaboration with the Societatea de Cultură macedo-română, organizing a strong media campaign, supported by regular conferences, demonstrations and the publication of numerous pamphlets arguing for strong diplomatic intervention by Romania in support of Macedo-Romanians.¹⁸⁸ In this context, Romania's policy of protecting the Vlach minority in Greece led to numerous diplomatic tensions between the two countries.¹⁸⁹

After World War II, the size of the Greek minority in Romania decreased dramatically, due mostly to the communist takeover and the nationalization of the maritime economy in the lower Danube, which disrupted cosmopolitan, transnational economic ties. A new, temporary wave of Greek political migrants occurred in Romania at the end of the Greek Civil War in the late 1950s. In 1990, upon the collapse of the communist regime in Romania, the Union of Greeks of Romania (Uniunea Elenilor din România) was created as an official representative of ethnic Greeks. According to official censuses, in 1992 there were 19,594 ethnic Greeks in Romania, living mostly in Bucharest but also in Constanța, Brăila and Galați. By 2002, their number fell to 6,513, due mostly to the migration of ethnic Greeks (called *omogeneis* in the Greek legislation) to the "mother country." At the same time, there has been a large-scale economically motivated migration to Greece from the Balkans, with Romania as one of the main source countries, along with Albania and Bulgaria.

¹⁸⁷ See the meeting of the League from October 27, 1912, in *Universul*, October 28, 1912, cited in Gheorghe Zbucă, *România și războaiele balcanice, 1912–1913. Pagini de istorie sud-est europeană* (Bucharest: Albatros, 1999), 103.

¹⁸⁸ Zbucă, *România și războaiele balcanice, 1912–1913*, 95.

¹⁸⁹ Vasile Arion, Vasile Pîrvan, Gheorghe Vîlsan, Pericle Papahagi, and Gheorghe Bogdan-Duică, *România și popoarele balcanice* (Bucharest: Tipografia națională, 1913).

Conclusions

This chapter has explored the Ottoman Greek elite migration in Moldavia and Wallachia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and its long-term impact on the internal organization of the two Principalities, as well as the emergence of the Romanian and Greek modern national ideologies and collective identities. It argues that the Ottoman Greek elite migration in the Principalities had a major sociopolitical impact on local affairs, leading to the emergence of a "Greek question." Unfolding over a period of two centuries as a series of major political crises, the "Greek question" was both a symptom of a more general social and political upheaval in Moldavia and Wallachia and a factor that shaped the evolution of the political regime in the two Principalities. In the seventeenth century the "Greek question" consisted of a fight for hegemony between the local nobility and the Ottoman Greeks who infiltrated the ruling class in the Principalities as members of the prince's *camarilla*. Although Greek immigration was not a new phenomenon in the Principalities, the high political status of the new type of Ottoman Greek immigrants and their growing cohesion as a group threatened the political monopoly of the local nobility. The "Greek seizure of power" (*acapararea greacă*),¹⁹⁰ as it was metaphorically called, was multifaceted, manifesting itself in the economic, religious, political and cultural fields. The Ottoman Greeks were perceived as the sultan's *instrumentum regni*, meant to assure the neutralization and removal of the great boyars from power and the ruthless exploitation of the Principalities, and thus catalyzed local nobles' resistance. Following the institution of the Porte's monopoly over the nomination of princes in 1669, and especially after the formal establishment of Phanariot rule in 1711/1716, the Greek migration went beyond sporadic infiltrations favored by pro-Ottoman princes to rely on a stable and highly influential imperial power network that secured its political domination in local affairs.

I argue that, in its initial stage, the development of modern citizenship in the Principalities was stimulated by a substantial increase in the economic and financial duties to the Ottoman Empire, and by the gradual penetration of Ottoman subjects into the Principalities and their accession to the ranks of the nobility, a fact that directly endangered the political monopoly of local nobles. Gradually, the nobles' reaction against the penetration of the Ottoman Greeks resulted in measures against "unwanted" foreigners,

¹⁹⁰ Georgescu, *Bizantul și instituțiile românești*, 89.

calls for a more clearly defined border between the Principalities and the Ottoman Empire, and a strict regulation of the status of Ottoman subjects in the territory of the Principalities. Given these developments, historian Vlad Georgescu argued that the emergence of the concept of citizenship in Moldavia and Wallachia was generated by “the systematic discrimination between the inhabitants of the Principalities and the subjects of other states.”¹⁹¹ The need to differentiate between local inhabitants and “internal foreigners” led to the development of the *drit de pământean*—the rights of the “native” or “indigenous” inhabitants—which acquired “a political-administrative value expressing, apart from the ethnic aspect, a relationship implying rights and obligations between the inhabitant and the sociopolitical community he belonged to.”¹⁹² It is important to note, however, that the elaboration of local mores into the coherent legal doctrine of *drit de pământean* was a long, arduous and non-linear process. The origins of this trend are to be found in the legal campaign waged during the seventeenth century by the local nobility against the Ottoman Greeks. As this chapter showed, this campaign achieved limited success: many of its legal components were either never applied or discontinued in the eighteenth century during the Phanariot “regime.”

The Phanariot role in the making of modern citizenship in the Principalities was fraught with contradictions. On the one hand, the Phanariots reformed the administration, emancipated the serfs, regularized the status of the aristocracy and codified civil laws, directly contributing to the modernization and the consolidation of the legal system and of the state apparatus, thus laying the foundations for the emergence of modern citizenship. On the other hand, the Phanariots blocked initiatives that would have led to the development of a distinct state citizenship in the Principalities, since that would have resulted in their administrative separation from the Ottoman center, thus cutting off the Phanariots’ source of power and legitimization. They also opposed the local nobility’s attempt to implement strict rules for the naturalization of foreigners, since that would have curtailed their clientele’s access to dignities and noble status and thus effectively disrupted their network in the Principalities.

Following the end of Phanariot rule, the local nobility managed to take significant steps toward consolidating the Principalities’ internal autonomy, such as the eradication of the Ottoman monopoly over trade in the

¹⁹¹ Georgescu, “The Concept of Citizenship,” in *Political Ideas*, 174.

¹⁹² Ibid.

Principalities, the retrocession of the *rayas*, the formal delimitation of the border with the empire on the Danube, and the creation of a local militia (1829). They also managed to implement an effective citizenship closure against the elite migration of Ottoman Greeks, as expressed in the regime of estates that functioned under the 1831 Organic Statutes. It is important to note, however, that excluding foreigners from office did not mean stemming all immigration. Instead, the Organic Statutes instituted a two-tier system of naturalization, which conferred full residential rights to all foreigners who decided to establish their domicile in the Principalities, but granted access to nobility status and political rights under strict criteria, closely monitored by the parliament. Overall, the Statutes should be seen as part of a larger process of transition from medieval estates to an oligarchic parliamentary regime that took place between 1830 and 1848 in Central and Eastern Europe.¹⁹³ They also signaled a turning point in the legal-political model emulated in the Principalities, away from the Ottoman Phanariot model of Byzantine inspiration and toward an oligarchic model resembling Polish and Hungarian models but filtered through the Russian authorities' views on modernization.

The end of Phanariot rule notwithstanding, the anti-Phanariot discourse continued to run like a thread through Romanian national ideology until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when it was gradually replaced by the "Jewish question." The social carriers of this discourse began to change, however: it was not the representatives of the great nobility who voiced discontent against the Greeks, as in the pre-Phanariot era, but representatives of the lower nobility, who provided the social basis of the rising bourgeois middle class. As shown above, the Ottoman Greek elite migration and the Phanariots' centralizing greatly affected the structure and the composition of the nobility in the Principalities. Gradually, the lines of the elite struggle for political pre-eminence were redefined, from the previous confrontation between local versus Ottoman Greek oligarchies to a fight between the expanding lesser nobility (whose expansion was in part a result of the Phanariot policy) versus the great nobles of local as well as Phanariot origin. Under the aristocratic regime that functioned on the basis of the Organic Statutes, the frictions among local versus Ottoman Greek factions of the great nobility faded away, the distinctions between the two groups being gradually attenuated by assimilation and matrimonial alliances; at the same time, eager to share into the privileges

¹⁹³ Brătianu, *Sfatul domnesc*, 258.

of the great nobility, the lower nobility articulated a patriotic yet often also xenophobic discourse meant to eliminate competition for resources from real or imagined rival groups while at the same time denouncing great nobles as non-national. This explains why, although after 1821 the Phanariots disappeared as political actors, they continued to be scapegoated in vitriolic political pamphlets as ruthless, greedy exploiters, as parasites on the body of the nations, and denounced as social corrupters, as parvenus (*ciocoi, parveniți*) who made their fortune by ruthlessly exploiting the peasantry.¹⁹⁴

It was only in the last quarter of the nineteenth century that the historiography on Phanariot rule became more nuanced, a trend initiated by the first neo-Hellenist scholar in Romania, Constantin Erbiceanu, and continued by three major historians of the new generation, A.D. Xenopol, V.A. Urechea and Nicolae Iorga.¹⁹⁵ Xenopol attempted to “normalize” the Phanariot period by integrating it into a longer historical perspective, so that the “Phanariot era does not appear as an abnormal occurrence in the life of the Romanian people” but the culmination of long-term social and political phenomena.¹⁹⁶ Xenopol nevertheless saw great historical importance in the Greek migration into the Principalities. He dated the beginning of the modern history of Romanians back to the second quarter of the seventeenth century, with the reign of Matei Basarab (1632–1654) in Wallachia and Vasile Lupu in Moldavia (1634–1653). Both princes, Xenopol noted, came to power as leaders of the national anti-Greek boyar parties; their reign, however, marked the decisive victory of the “Greek party” in the Principalities.¹⁹⁷ Xenopol regarded Greek penetration in Moldavia and Wallachia as a disaster by which the Greek element “gained control over all of the Romanian nation’s means of existence and covers its entire existence under its overwhelming veil.”¹⁹⁸ Within this new national historical-narrative-in-the-making, the first anti-Greek revolt, in 1611, was celebrated

¹⁹⁴ The image of the Phanariots as parvenus was to become a cliché in Romanian literature. See Nicolae Filimon’s popular novel *Ciocoi vechi și noi, sau ce naste din pisică șoareci mănâncă* (Bucharest: C. Muller, 1896). On this issue, see also Alexandre Ciorănescu, “Nicolas Filimon et le portrait littéraire du Phanariote,” in *Symposium. L’Epoque phanariote*, 85–92.

¹⁹⁵ See Xenopol, *Istoria românilor din Dacia Traiană*; “Les Roumains et les Grecs,” 38–50; and *Epoca fanarioșilor 1711–1821*; and Nicolae Iorga, *Cultura română supt fanarioși*; and *Istoria literaturii române în secolul al XVIII-lea (1688–1821)*, 2 vols.

¹⁹⁶ A.D. Xenopol, *Istoria Românilor din Dacia Traiana*, vol. 4: *Istoria Modernă*, part 1, “De la Mateiu Basarab și Vasile Lupu până la domnia fanarioșii” (Iași: Tipo-litografia H. Goldner, 1891), 20.

¹⁹⁷ Xenopol, *Istoria Românilor din Dacia Traiana*, vol. 4, part 1, 20.

¹⁹⁸ Xenopol, *Istoria Românilor din Dacia Traiană*, vol. 3, 448–449.

by historian Obedeau as “the first boyar revolution against the Greeks,” while the 1821 uprising led by Tudor Vladimirescu became the symbol of national awakening and regarded as the culmination of a long process of emancipation.¹⁹⁹

The historical reevaluation of the Phanariots was further continued, in a new key, by V.A. Urechea and Nicolae Iorga. Urechea published a massive collection of documentary sources covering the period 1774–1821, in an attempt to enable a more informed historical interpretation of the Phanariot period.²⁰⁰ For his part, Nicolae Iorga went far beyond the “normalization” of the Phanariot period by also deconstructing and refuting all the major anti-Phanariot stereotypes that arose in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. “Do I intend to rehabilitate the Phanariots, to turn the stigmatized figures of [history] textbooks into respectable characters? I confess without reservation: Yes, I do. My scientific task is the historical truth, and I intend to fulfill it.”²⁰¹ In his writings, Iorga pointed out that the Phanariots were not “Greeks” but had varied social and ethnic origins; that they were not indiscriminately corrupt and unscrupulous but that many of them were enlightened rulers who introduced important reforms and laid the foundation for the social modernization of the Principalities. Iorga thus rehabilitated Phanariot princes as enlightened, well-intended and even patriotic rulers; he also argued that the Phanariot era should not be judged for its “allegedly Greek character” but for “its Turkish methods but Western philosophy,” which introduced great, albeit superficial, changes that would nevertheless have a “deep” long-term impact on the Principalities.²⁰²

Although Iorga’s views did not pass unchallenged,²⁰³ in the long run he managed to set a new trend in Romanian historiography, leading to more nuanced perspectives on the history of Phanariot rule in the Principalities. These elite historiographical perspectives did little, however, to change deeply entrenched stereotypes against the Phanariots in mass or popular culture. Most importantly, the negative stereotypes on the Phanariots penetrated history textbooks for primary and secondary schools as well,

¹⁹⁹ Obedeau, *Grecii în Țara-Românească*, 12; see also C.V. Obedeau, *Tudor Vladimirescu în istoria contemporană a României* (Bucharest: Scrisul românesc, 1929).

²⁰⁰ V.A. Urechia, *Istoria Românilor* (Bucharest: Lito-Tipografia C. Goebel, 1891), 13 vols.

²⁰¹ Nicolae Iorga, *Două conferințe: I. Luptele românilor cu turcii de la Mihai-Viteazul încoace; II. Cultura română sub fanarioți: Ținute la Ateneul Român în zilele de 1 și 8 Februarie 1898* (Bucharest: Editura Librăriei Socescu și Comp, 1898), 54.

²⁰² Iorga, “Prefață,” in Del Chiaro, *Revoluțiile Valahiei*, 3.

²⁰³ For an opposing view to Iorga’s, see Pompiliu Eliade, *Histoire de l’esprit public en Roumanie au XIX^e siècle* (Paris: Société nouvelle de librairie et d’édition, 1905).

shaping the historical imagination of the new generations. A 1930 secondary textbook authored by Ion S. Floru illustrates the persistence of the discourse on Ottoman Greeks as vicious, following stereotypes inaugurated by Neculce two centuries earlier: "...among us, the Greeks promoted intrigue, humiliation and hypocrisy, on the one hand, and arrogance, pride and pomp, on the other hand, and displayed all the negative character traits encompassed by the notions of Byzantinism and Phanariotism."²⁰⁴ In modern Romanian political language, "Phanariot" thus remained a term of opprobrium associated with corruption, venality and opportunism.²⁰⁵

The political conflicts generated by the Ottoman Greek migration in the Principalities and the demonization of the Phanariots in Romanian national ideology should not, however, obscure the long-lasting intellectual, political and demographic effects of the Hellenic-Romanian entanglements on the emergence of the modern Greek and Romanian nations. Assessing the considerable impact of modern Greek culture in Moldavia and Wallachia, literary critic Paul Cornea pointed out the "Greek-Romanian symbiosis" in social and intellectual life that peaked between 1790 and 1821.²⁰⁶ These multifaceted entanglements had long-lasting effects, manifest in church affairs, in the economy and in culture and politics.

Moreover, although Phanariot rule was portrayed as non- or even anti-national, many acts of the Phanariots were in fact important landmarks in the long-term process of nation- and state- building in the Principalities. One pertinent example of these entanglements is the extraordinary vitality of the Byzantine model and its continuous appropriation and recreation in the Orthodox world. In an authoritative survey of the Byzantine legacy in Moldavia and Wallachia, Valentin Georgescu argued that in the second half of the eighteenth century, the Principalities underwent "a turning point" in their evolution and entered the modern period under the impact of the sweeping legal and political reforms implemented by the Phanariot princes, inspired by the principles of the Western Enlightenment as

²⁰⁴ Ion S. Floru, *Istoria românilor: pentru cursul superior de liceu* (Bucharest: Socec, 1930), 236. For other similar examples, see N.A. Constantinescu, *Istoria Românilor pentru cl. IV secundară* (Bucharest, 1929), 218, and S. Mehedinți, Octavian Goga, V.D. Țoni and V. Voiculescu, *Carte de citire pentru cl. IV primară* (Bucharest: 1931), 348, cited in Ionescu-Nișcov, "L'époque phanariote dans l'historiographie roumaine et étrangère," 145.

²⁰⁵ For the extraordinary resilience of the anti-Phanariot discourse in Romanian culture, surviving into the post-communist era, see Mihai Chioveanu, "Acuza de fanariotism: atitudini post-politice și alterități fictive în structurarea identității naționale și culturii politice la români," *Xenopoliana* 8, nos. 1–4 (2000): 61–72.

²⁰⁶ Paul Cornea, "Simbioza greco-română și renașterea elenismului," in *Originile roman-tismului*, 61–64.

filtered by modern Greek scholarship.²⁰⁷ It is important to stress, however, that the line between tradition and modernization was not sharply delineated. Thus, far from being completely obsolete, many elements of the Byzantine legal tradition were actually built into the matrix of the modern codes adopted by the Phanariots in the Principalities, *Legiuirea Caragea* and *Codul Calimachi*. These codes of laws were part of Romania's legislation until the adoption of the new Civil Code in 1865 and, for certain transactions enacted under these codes, even beyond that period. In addition, seen in retrospect, Westernizers' plans of modernization often followed in the footsteps of previous efforts initiated by the Ottomans' local agents in the Principalities, the Phanariots, often appropriating and capitalizing on their initiatives.

Similarly, the Byzantine political tradition served as a main reference point and resource for building modern Greece, together with the tradition of Greek antiquity, which inspired European philo-Hellenic liberal trends. This process was facilitated by the fact that, within the autonomous Orthodox *millet* in the Ottoman Empire, Byzantine canon law and civil law served as the basis for religious as well as civil relations. Thus it is not surprising that after the establishment of autonomous Greece in 1821, Byzantine law was proclaimed to be the basis of the legal system of the new state, until a new civil code could be adopted. It is interesting to note that the Byzantine law adopted in Greece did not consist only of the imperial codes of law, such as the *Hexabiblos*: Greek statesmen and law-makers also invoked the tradition of Byzantine codification as renewed and updated by Hellenic scholars in the Principalities, culminating in the Byzantine-style codes adopted in the eighteenth century in Moldavia and Wallachia. The Phanariot "laboratory" in modern codification that functioned in the Principalities thus served nation- and state-building purposes in nascent Greece as well.

In the long run, the collapse of Ottoman rule in the Balkans led to a process of gradual disentanglement between the two competing oligarchies—local vs. Ottoman Greek—and the disjunction of two distinct nation- and state-building projects in Greece and Romania. The "Zappas affair" was symptomatic of the process of national separation that severed previous trans-regional ties that characterized the former Ottoman imperial world.²⁰⁸ Evangelis Zappas was born in the village of Labovë, in the Ottoman province of northern Epirus (now part of the Gjirokastër

²⁰⁷ Georgescu, *Bizantul și instituțiile românești*.

²⁰⁸ Pasquale Fiore, *Successione Zappa: Controversia tra la Grecia e la Romania* (Rome: Tipografia nazionale di G. Bertero, 1894).

region of Albania). In his youth he served as a mercenary in the Ottoman army of Ali Pasha and then joined Markos Botsaris's Souliot forces fighting in the Greek War of Independence. In 1831 Zappas settled in Wallachia and later became naturalized there.²⁰⁹ During the time, Zappas amassed huge wealth, becoming a large landowner and entrepreneur. Zappas was not a Phanariot and was not linked with the Phanariots' imperial power networks. Nevertheless, in many ways, Zappas was a typical product of the cosmopolitan late-Ottoman imperial context: he assumed multiple identities related to his place of birth (Albania), his ethnic origin (Greek) and his adopted country (Wallachia, later Romania). Through his philanthropic activity, Zappas contributed to the national awakening of the Romanians, the Albanians and the Greeks. He financially supported the nascent Romanian Literary Society and sponsored several academic projects, such as a new synthesis on the history of the Romanians, a dictionary and a grammar of the Romanian language. At the same time, he also financed a newspaper and book publications in the Albanian language in Romania, while in Greece Zappas initiated and financed the revival of the ancient Olympic Games in Athens (1859). Evangelis Zappas died on June 19, 1865, and was buried on his estate in Wallachia. According to his will, his remains were exhumed four years after his death and partially reburied in his native Labovë, Albania, while his skull was buried in Athens, in a crypt at Zappeion (the Olympic building designed by the Danish architect Theophil Hansen and named after Zappas), in an attempt to pay tribute to all components of his assumed multiple identities.

Significantly, however, the nationalizing logic of the modern nation-state was applied to Zappas's transnational legacy as well. He devoted his vast fortune to sponsoring the modern Olympic Games in Athens; the first modern Olympics took place in 1859, during his lifetime, and the second in 1870, due to the work of Konstantinos Zappas, Evangelis's cousin and executor of his will. In 1892 the attempts of the Greek state to take over the rights of the association in charge of administering Zappas's wealth generated an international litigation between Romania and Greece, leading to a suspension of relations between the two states from 1892 to 1896. The intricate legal arguments aside, the outcome of the Zappa affair was yet another indication that, with the end of the Ottoman political order, a whole range of imperial entanglements came to an end.

²⁰⁹ *Enciclopedia cuvântarea*, 924. For a biography in English, see <http://www.zappas.org/zappas.html>.

BULGARIAN-GREEK DIS/ENTANGLEMENTS

Roumen Daskalov

The emergence and rise of the Bulgarian nation during the Revival era in the last decades of Ottoman rule is inextricably connected with the Greeks. It started as a reaction to the danger of Graecization (Hellenization), the alarm over which was sounded as early as 1762 by the monk Paisiy of Hilendar Monastery. The Bulgarians first learned from the more advanced Greeks, who acted as mediators of modernity in the empire, and then turned against them and developed their own national ideology in a bitter struggle with Greek nationalism (which started earlier). But the latter also evolved under the impact of this rivalry and strife. The resulting dynamics entangled both nations with far-reaching consequences.

Greek cultural influence over the Bulgarians attracted a great deal of attention in older (pre-communist) Bulgarian historiography, particularly in literary scholarship, which was interested primarily in the cultural (“spiritual”) revival and the building up of national consciousness and national culture. It dealt with the ideological, educational and literary influences, transfers and receptions among the Bulgarians—Greek, Russian, French and others. Considerable attention was paid to the Bulgarian controversy with the ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople, which led to the creation of an autonomous Bulgarian church (Exarchate) in 1870 and intensified the struggle with the Greeks for Macedonia and Thrace. Communism brought about a reorientation of the Bulgarian scholarship on the Revival era, privileging social (class) struggles and revolutionary endeavors and, for a time, eclipsing cultural themes and the national Church struggle. The turn toward nationalism since the late 1960s partially rehabilitated the older scholarship. In the late socialist era (the 1970s and 1980s), interest in cultural issues—such as the reception of modern ideas, education, the intelligentsia and the press—was on the rise, and there was renewed interest in the Church conflict.¹ With the fall of communism in 1989, the traditional, more or less nationalist, Bulgarian

¹ On the Bulgarian historiography of the Revival era, see Roumen Daskalov, *The Making of a Nation in the Balkans: Historiography of the Bulgarian Revival* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2004).

scholarship of the Revival dominated the field (though not unchallenged), and there were promising attempts at critical and reflective history writing. Concerning Bulgarian-Greek relations in particular, the most perceptive studies dealt with the life and ideas of Greek-educated personalities and used them to approach the complex conditions of the Ottoman Empire and its intellectual universe. Additionally, some scholarly, dispassionate works appeared on the formation and functioning of the national historical narrative, which deal with national identities and images and stereotypes of the Other.

It would be unfair to say that the various Greek influences over the Bulgarians have been under-researched. Over time a great deal of archival material was processed and meticulous studies were produced, especially by Balkan studies scholars. But most of the studies, particularly the standard general works, are ideologically prejudiced by the conscious or unconscious nationalism of historians too preoccupied with “us” against “them.” This unconscious nationalism takes national belonging as an almost natural “given,” essentializes national identities and projects the Bulgarian-Greek conflict backwards in time. Yet there are remarkable exceptions of unprejudiced Bulgarian scholars both from the “old school” (Ivan Shishmanov, Yordan Ivanov, Hristo Gandev) and today (Nadya Danova, Nikolay Aretov, Desislava Lilova, the Belgian scholar Raymond Detrez). The present chapter attempts to show how closely the Bulgarian and Greek pre-national and national elites were interconnected and “entangled” over a long period and what this entanglement produced. It attempts a “panoramic” and “synthetic” overview along the whole spectrum of Bulgarian-Greek relations and interactions and treats them not as a passing episode or a lateral “theme” (as in the self-contained national narrative) but as a fundamentally important shaping force of nationalism. In working out the mutual interconnections and articulations, I will make use of the research and aperçus of earlier Bulgarian authors and the results of more recent scholarship that point in that direction, together with some recent Greek scholarship along similar lines. There is a clear asymmetry between my use of various Bulgarian sources and works and reliance on the mostly secondary Greek works in Western languages accessible to me. Rather than trying to justify this with some “scholarly” reason (such as the initially stronger Greek Impact), I would prefer to admit my language limitations and hope that the study will still be useful.²

² I would like to express my gratitude to the Bulgarian scholar of modern Greece Nadya Danova for reading and commenting on this chapter.

The Advance of Hellenism

The monk Paisiy of Hilendar Monastery on Mount Athos was a precursor of the Bulgarian National Revival, but his was a lonely voice, and his patriotic manuscript, of which only a few dozen copies are known, did not exert wide influence when it was written in 1762. He was rediscovered as the “father” of the Bulgarian national awakening much later, first by the historian Marin Drinov in 1871.³ The actual Revival was preceded by the dramatic “Times of Trouble”—the anarchy at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries that wreaked havoc in the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire and made many Bulgarians leave the plains, flock to mountainous areas and towns and organize their own militia in self-defense. After the Russo-Turkish War of 1828–1829 concluded with the Edirne (Adrianople) Peace Treaty, the national awakening began with the proclamation of the Ottoman reform era (Tanzimat) in 1839, when conditions became more favorable. In the meantime Greek social and cultural dominance, which the more nationalist voices in Bulgarian historiography labeled a “spiritual yoke,” had reached its zenith. It found expression in the “Hellenization” (Graecization) of many Bulgarians, as well as of Vlachs, Albanians and others. This was a largely natural and voluntary process of imitating a socially more prestigious group to the point of full identification and cultural assimilation.⁴ In other words, the primary motive and driving force behind the process—as also revealed in Paisiy’s patriotic exhortations—was social promotion with the outcome of cultural assimilation. What made Greekness so attractive to the Bulgarians and other peoples in the Ottoman Empire? And what did “Greekness” actually mean?

Greek influence and prestige were connected with Greeks’ dominant position in commerce within the Ottoman Empire and with other states. The Greek traders enjoyed a number of rights and privileges accorded to them by the Ottomans and by other states (such as the right to navigate under the Russian flag with the treaties of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774 and of Iași in 1792). They had commercial colonies in Europe, especially in the

³ Marin Drinov, “Otets Paisiy, negovoto vreme, negovata istoriya i uchenitsite mu,” *Periodichesko spisanie na BKD* 1, no. 4 (1871): 3–26.

⁴ On cultural assimilation with the Greeks, see Boyan Penev, *Nachalo na bălgarskoto vāzrazhdane* (Sofia: Chihev, 1929; first published in 1918), 14–16; Hristo Gandev, “Faktori na bălgarskoto vāzrazhdane, 1600–1830,” in Hristo Gandev, *Problemi na bălgarskoto vāzrazhdane* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1976; first published in 1943), 23–153, esp. 77–79.

Habsburg and the Russian empires, in Italy, France and elsewhere, and far-flung business networks; they also possessed a large commercial fleet. As the contemporary German historian Gervinus notes, the development of commerce, industry and knowledge in the Ottoman Empire was primarily due to the Greeks; they worked as priests, doctors, businesspeople, translators, diplomats and army inspectors, among others, and had managed to take all these activities as well as administrative power in their hands.⁵ Beyond a mere ethnonym, “Greek” came to mean “trader” and “urbanite,” that is, a professional and social category.⁶ Conversely, “Bulgarian” came to be identified with “peasant,” because the Bulgarians lacked urban elites of their own and most Bulgarians were, in fact, peasants.⁷

But there is more to it than that. The “Greek” well-to-do urban class was only partly ethnically Greek, in spite of the Greek language it used in its affairs and its Greek (that is, partly Europeanized) outlook and manners. It had a multiethnic composition, since it absorbed upwardly mobile persons from various ethnic (primarily Christian Orthodox) backgrounds. It would be more accurate to refer to these social elites as Orthodox or Romaic—a designation of the multiethnic population of the Byzantine Empire, adopted by the Ottomans in naming the Orthodox “people” a *Rum-millet*. The Greeks stood at the top of these elites and gave them their name, language and culture, but this did not make them ethnically Greek. In fact, members of this elite despised Greek peasants just as they did other peasants and did not consider them part of their community.

Greek language became the *lingua franca* of the Ottoman Empire, especially in commercial dealings, in ecclesiastical (Christian Orthodox) matters, in public affairs (records of the communes, and of the craftsmen’s guilds, known as *esnaf*) and in public communication in general. This is one of the reasons—a purely pragmatic one—why the study of Greek,

⁵ G.G. Gervinus, *Régénération de la Grèce* (Paris, 1863), 130. Similarly Cyprien Robert, *Les slaves de Turquie*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1844), 324.

⁶ On the role of Greek traders and of “Greek” becoming an economic and social category with the consequent “Hellenization” of ethnically different members of this class, see Traian Stoianovich, “The Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant,” in Traian Stoianovich, *Between East and West: The Balkan and Mediterranean Worlds*, vol. 2, *Economies and Societies: Traders, Towns, and Households* (New York: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1992), 50, 62–63. See also Raymond Detrez in the present volume.

⁷ In this sense Pandeli Kisimov, *Istoricheski raboti. Moite spomeni*, part 1 (Plovdiv, 1897), 4–5, 8–9, 20–24; Boyan Penev, *Istoriya na novata bălgarska literatura*, vol. 1, ed. Boris Yotsov (Sofia, 1930), 216–217. About the stigmatization of the Bulgarian language and ethnos, see Desislava Lilova, *Văzrozhdenskite znacheniya na natsionalnoto ime* (Sofia: Prosveta, 2003), 40–51.

as a widespread language of affairs and public communication, was warmly encouraged by Bulgarian “Hellenists” (versed in Greek) in prefaces for dictionaries and phrasebooks and elsewhere. These included Hristaki Pavlovich’s introduction to his *Greek-Bulgarian Phrasebook* (Belgrade, 1835),⁸ Rayno Popovich in the introduction to his *Hristoitiya* (Good Manners, 1837)⁹ and Ivan Bogorov in an advertisement for his *Greek-Slav Dictionary* in 1849.¹⁰ As late as 1858 Ivan Bogorov, editor of the journal *Bălgarski knizhitsi* (Bulgarian Booklets) in Constantinople, recommended the study of Greek to his compatriots for the same reasons.¹¹ But unlike Vlach Daniil (or Daniel) of Moschopolis in the preface to his 1802 Greek-Vlach-Bulgarian-Albanian dictionary, these already patriotic authors did not advise Graecization as an avenue of social promotion.¹²

Greek cultural influence also reached the Bulgarians and other Orthodox populations through the hierarchy of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, due to its official Greek language and the appointment mostly (though not exclusively) of Greeks or Graecized clerics in higher positions. The Greek language dominated the liturgy and Church affairs in general, replacing Church Slavonic, though not entirely or everywhere (and cases are known in which even Greeks officiated in Church Slavonic). This is not to say that the Patriarchate conducted Hellenizing policies all along, in contrast to what is affirmed in earlier nationalistic Bulgarian writings of both national activists and later historians. This was simply a fact of life due to the predominantly Greek personnel, language and culture of this originally Byzantine institution. Every metropolitan and bishop was a center of power in his eparchy (in addition to the local Ottoman authorities) vested with administrative authority over the Christians in various public matters, not just ecclesiastic, but civil as well (such as meting out

⁸ Hristaki Pavlovich, *Razgovornik greko-bolgarskiy* (Belgrade, 1835).

⁹ Rayno Popovich, *Hristoitiya ili blagonravie* (Budim, 1837) (reprinted in *Văzrozhdenski straniitsi. Antologiya*, vol. 1, ed. Petăr Dinekov [Sofia: Bălgarski pisatel, 1969], 287–312, esp. 292).

¹⁰ *Tsarigradski vestnik* (1849), no. 79. Quoted in Ivan Shishmanov, “Uvod v istoriyata na bălgarskoto vāzrazhdane,” in Ivan Shishmanov, *Izbrani săchineniya*, vol. 1 (*Bălgarsko vāzrazhdane*) (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na BAN, 1965), 31–73, esp. 54 (first published in *Bălgariya 1000 godini, 927–1927* [Sofia, 1930], 279–319).

¹¹ Quoted in Ivan Shishmanov, “Znachenie i zaslugi na bratya Miladinovi,” in Ivan Shishmanov, *Izbrani săchineniya*, vol. 1 (*Bălgarsko vāzrazhdane*) (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na BAN, 1965), 351–370, esp. 363–364 (first published in *Spisanie na BAN*, 1912, book 3, 43–72).

¹² A Bulgarian translation and analysis of Daniil’s appeal appears in Yordan Ivanov, *Bălgaro-grătski otnosheniya predi tsărkovnata borba* (Sofia, 1911), 7–10. Unlike other Bulgarian authors, Yordan Ivanov is of the opinion that Daniil wanted to please the Greek bishop who supported him rather than Graecize the users of his dictionary.

justice). It was only natural that bishops would stand at the center of the local Christian elites and create a circle of adherents, Hellenizing them. The prestige of the Greek language and culture, and hence Greek identity, were thus reinforced by the authority of religion and of the Orthodox Church as an institution with vast powers over the life of its flock.

The very fact that the Ottoman system of rule divided the subjects into religious communities (*millets*) and united all Orthodox Christians in one *Rum-millet* (community of *Romios*, a term that originally meant “citizens of Byzantium”) obscured the particular ethnonyms of the Orthodox populations behind the common (religious) designation *Romios*. In fact, over centuries of Ottoman rule, an Orthodox “Romaic” community had emerged based on a common name, common religion, common institutions, a feeling of solidarity and unity, the Greek language as *lingua franca*, and a common culture, which has been appropriately described (using Hobsbawm’s term) as a “popular proto-nation.”¹³ It was shattered with the advent of modern ethnic nationalism, ironically first developed by the Greek “enlighteners,” and followed by others.¹⁴ Because of the Greek dominance of the Patriarchate and Greek visibility in general, the designation “of Orthodox faith” had become synonymous with the Greek ethnic name, especially for foreigners from the West (as in “Greek Orthodox” or just Greek faith). This identification was later instrumentalized by the Greek nationalists as a Hellenizing strategy, while it was difficult for the other ethnic groups to attain visibility and recognition and disentangle themselves from the “Greek” Orthodox *Rum-millet*.

In addition, the Greek heritage was never forgotten in Europe. The Philhellenism of influential circles fostered sympathy for the Greeks as heirs of an acclaimed ancient legacy accepted as a “cradle” of European civilization itself. By contrast, the Bulgarians were invisible and had to wait for Slavic scholars and the Ukrainian historian Yuriy Venelin to promote their name and cause in Russia and Europe.

Finally, Greek education (“classical” and modern) became a powerful channel and vehicle of Greek influence and prestige in the Balkans. This

¹³ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 46–79.

¹⁴ See Paschalis Kitromilides, *An Orthodox Commonwealth: Symbolic Legacies and Cultural Encounters in Southeastern Europe* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Variorum, 2007); Raymond Detrez, “Understanding the Pre-National(ist) Balkans: The Romaic Community,” in *Relations gréco-bulgares: interculturalité et identité nationale*, eds. P.M. Kitromilides and Anna Tabaki (Athens: Institut de recherches néohelléniques, Fondation nationale de recherche scientifique, 2009). See also Detrez’s contribution to the present volume.

influence grew in the modern era, when educated Greeks in various localities became mediators of Western influences and Enlightenment ideas in particular. The Greek elites managed to preserve a strong tradition of education (with a few very good schools) all along, and they succeeded in expanding and modernizing it with secular curricula in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹⁵ The Greek schools became more numerous and were endowed and supported by rich Greek patrons (and those of other ethnic groups); some were supported by the Patriarchate. They attracted students of various ethnic origins and taught them to value the Greek language and ancient Greek culture. The prestige of education and knowledge was thus added to that of wealth and power to enhance the attractiveness of “Greekness” for the Bulgarians and other peoples in the empire. In sum, to be Greek meant being urban, prosperous, educated, noble; by contrast, Bulgarian came to mean being an ignorant peasant. As a prominent contemporary Bulgarian intellectual pointed out in retrospect, Greek intellectual culture came to embrace the whole peninsula, and civilization essentially meant Greek culture (while direct French and other Western influences came later).¹⁶

Greeks (of some prominence) thus played for the Bulgarians the role of an “ethno-class”—to be more precise, a higher ethno-class endowed with secular “high culture” (while religion was shared). Conversely, the Bulgarians were a lower ethno-class vis-à-vis the Greeks settled “in pockets” among them. Had the Greeks also been politically dominant, the Bulgarians might have assimilated even more readily.¹⁷ But the fact that the politically dominant group—the Ottomans—possessed culture of a very alien type (Muslim, non-European, not modern) kept the Bulgarians within the Orthodox community, and the very split between political and “spiritual” domination facilitated their emancipation because they fought first the latter and then the former.¹⁸

¹⁵ About the famous Greek schools above the elementary level (that is, colleges, lycees and gymnasiums) in the Ottoman Empire and outside it, see G. Chassiotis, *L'instruction publique chez les Grecs* (Paris, 1881), 24–91.

¹⁶ Marko Balabanov, *Gavril Krăstovich* (Sofia, 1914), 27.

¹⁷ An understanding of this appears in Penev, *Istoriya na novata*, vol. 1, 157–158. According to the author, if the Ottomans had had the higher culture of the Germans or the Austrians, the Bulgarian “nationality” would have disappeared like the Slavs on the Elbe and the Baltics.

¹⁸ The Bulgarian case bears some resemblance to the classical Habsburg (and southern and eastern) form of nationalism in Gellner’s typology of nationalisms. See Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983, reprinted 1984), 88–101, esp. 97–98. The resemblance is in the situation of foreign domination, with its “high culture,” alongside

It should not be forgotten that “Greek” (Hellenic and Byzantine) culture had exerted a mighty influence south of the Balkan range since antiquity (Greek colonies on the Black Sea, economic exchange with the local populations, cultural influence) and during the Byzantine Empire (Christianization of the Bulgarians, “high culture,” Greek colonies on the Black Sea and in Thrace). It had also led to “Romaicization,” meaning cultural amalgamation of Slav and other ethnic groups in the towns under Byzantine rule, but also under Bulgarian (medieval) rule.¹⁹ The “Hellenizing” (“Graecizing”) tendency thus had precedents and had left traces. In the modern era it spread mostly to the bigger towns, especially those with Greek nuclei of bishops and their retinues and with colonies of Greek traders and Graecized Tsintsars (also called Aromanians or Vlachs). It especially affected more prominent and richer Bulgarians (*chorbadzhii*) engaged in commerce, tax collection, money-lending and so on, who willingly affiliated with the Greeks and the Graecized urban “aristocracy.”

The Graecization (*gärcheene*) of non-Greeks found expression in changing the given name to Greek and Graecization of the surname (by adding a Greek suffix), aspiration toward Greek education (especially for boys), the use of Greek language (or words from it, especially kinship words), social interaction with mostly Greeks and Graecized people, living in separate “Greek quarters” (*mahale*), adoption of Greek (“Levantine”) urban manners and way of life, eventual marriage in this circle (and considerable influence of the Greek wives in the upbringing of the children), and finally, self-ascription to the Greek ethnos. It was experienced with a feeling of pride as social promotion, that is, leaving behind the vulgar (and illiterate) masses and becoming a noble (“aristocrat”—*evgenestatos*,

which a variety of ethnic folk cultures existed. But the dominant “high culture” of the Ottoman Empire was Muslim and not modern (secular), which made assimilation en masse difficult because of the religious dividing line (crossed, of course, by many individuals from various ethnic groups recruited in the Ottoman ruling class). Another difference was the availability in the empire of the traditional shared (pre-modern) Orthodox “high culture” in its Greek and Slavonic forms and since the end of the eighteenth century of (modern, secular) Hellenic “high culture.” This “high culture” was largely European (of the Enlightenment), but mediated by the Greeks and “translated” into the Greek language, and for that reason perceived as Greek. Bulgarians found this culture the most attractive for cultural assimilation (“Hellenization”) before they began developing a “high culture” of their own, one with significant input from the Hellenic (and through it, European) “high culture” and later Russian high culture.

¹⁹ Hristo Gandeve, “Zakonomernosti v otnosheniyata mezhdú bălgarskiya i grătskiya narod prez Văzrazhdaneto,” in *V chest na akad. Dimităr Kosev. Izsledvaniya po sluchay 70 godini ot rozhdenieto mu* (Sofia, 1974), 37–58, esp. 37–40.

archon). Hellenization was a major way to “entangle” pre-existing ethnic groups around social and cultural criteria irrespective of ethnic features and boundaries until the growth of Greek nationalism imparted it with a national meaning. It was only with the rise of Bulgarian nationalism that this process came to be seen as reprehensive national “apostasy” and the need for division into nations was acutely felt.

There is plenty of evidence for the advance of Hellenism among the Bulgarians in the sense of social-cultural assimilation, especially where Bulgarians lived in close contact with Greeks or Graecized people, that is, in major multiethnic cities and areas with a mixed population closer to Greece (parts of Macedonia and Thrace), particularly among traders and educated people.²⁰ Here is the testimony of Cousin  ry, French consul in Salonika, who traveled through Macedonia at the end of the eighteenth century accompanied by a Bulgarian striving to pass as Greek:

The Bulgarian Apostol tried to pass as Greek rather than Bulgarian. I had noticed that the young people of Bulgarian nationality readily identify with the Greeks when they live in towns, where bishops reside and where, therefore, there are schools. They consider themselves more refined if they have passed through a Greek school and acquired knowledge that cannot be provided by Bulgarian education alone.²¹

A major, albeit nationally biased, source for the thoroughly Greek and Graecized Philippoupolis (Plovdiv) of the early nineteenth century is Konstantin Moravenov’s local historical record. He describes the advanced state of Hellenization at the end of the eighteenth century and considers the reverse process of Bulgarianization, which started with a demographic shift (an influx of Bulgarians) and took a national form starting in the 1850s.²² The prominent Bulgarian man of letters and revolutionary

²⁰ Such observations appear in Vasil Aprilov, “Dennitsa na novob  lgarskoto obrazovanie,” in Vasil Aprilov, *S  chineniya*, ed. Petko Totev (Sofia: B  lgarski pisatel, 1986), 22–147, esp. 22; Ivan Seliminski, “Istoricheski spomen,” in Ivan Seliminski, *Izbrani s  chineniya* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1979), 303–337, esp. 306–308, 310 (written in 1855); Petko Slaveykov, “Opravdanieto,” *Makedoniya*, November 4, 1867 (reprinted in Petko Slaveykov, *S  chineniya v osem toma*, eds. Stoyanka Mihailova and Docho Lekov, vol. 5 [Sofia: B  lgarski pisatel, 1980]), 442–448, esp. 447–448. About Macedonia in Dimit  r Miladinov’s letter to Aleksand  r Ekzarh (from 1852), see *V  zrozhdenski stranitsi*, 454–456; Grigor P  rlichev, “Avtobiografiya,” in Grigor P  rlichev, *Izbrani proizvedeniya* (Sofia: B  lgarski pisatel, 1970, written in 1884–1885), 197–290, esp. 239. See also Ganchev, “Zakonomernosti,” 40–42.

²¹ Esprit-Marie Cousin  ry, *Voyage dans la Mac  doine* (Paris, 1831), 159.

²² Konstantin Moravenov, *Pametnik za plovdivskoto hristiyansko naselenie v grada i za obshhtite zavedeniya po proiznosno predanie* (Plovdiv: Hristo G. Danov, 1984, a manuscript donated to the Bulgarian Chitalishte [reading room] in Istanbul in 1869). For a perceptive

Lyuben Karavelov gave a humorous description of the Hellenization in Plovdiv, where he was sent by his father to study “the hellenica” (Greek language and education) in preparation for a career as a trader. The older townspeople—a mixture of Greeks, Tsintsars (Vlachs) and Graecized Bulgarians—spoke in a funny melange of Greek, Bulgarian and Turkish and considered themselves nobles. Their wives tried to mold their Bulgarian relatives—to make “fine Rhomean leather” out of the raw Bulgarian skins.²³

In a donation inscription of the 1850s in the Greek church in Temesvar (in the Habsburg Empire), a certain Bulgarian trader Zlatko from Gabrovo (a purely Bulgarian town) presented himself as a “Hellene from Gabrovo.”²⁴ The teacher (of the Greek language) Dimităr Miladinov, a pioneer of Bulgarianism in Macedonia, writes (in an 1852 letter): “Almost six-eighths of Macedonia, which is populated by Bulgarians in language, all study Greek letters and are called Greeks by the Greeks, except for the Slavs farther to the north, who are advancing in the Slavic language.”²⁵ Journalist and philologist Ivan Bogorov, also a Greek-school graduate, noted that even in 1874, some educated Bulgarians first wrote in Greek and then translated it into Bulgarian, because it was hard for them to express themselves in their mother tongue.²⁶

Greek influence intensified in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to a degree that would have thrown Paisiy into despair. To the traditional Greek commercial bourgeoisie and Church prelates, the attraction of a modern, Western-educated Greek intelligentsia was now added. It functioned as a mediator of Enlightenment secular ideas and engaged in reforming Greek education on a secular basis, the cultivation of patriotism and national self-awareness among the Greeks through schools, literature, the press and charitable public deeds. It was through the Greeks

analysis of interethnic relations, see Raymond Detrez, “Relations between Greeks and Bulgarians in the Pre-Nationalist Era: The *Gudilas* in Plovdiv,” in *Greece and the Balkans: Identities, Perceptions and Cultural Encounters since the Enlightenment*, ed. Dimitris Tziouvas (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2003), 30–43.

²³ Lyuben Karavelov, “Zapiski za Bălgariya i bălgarite,” in Lyuben Karavelov, *Săbrani săchineniya*, vol. 4 (Sofia: Bălgarski pisatel, 1984; first published in Russian in 1867), 367–501, esp. 422–439.

²⁴ According to the ironic testimony of Georgi Rakovski in the notes to his 1857 epic *Gorski pătnik*. See Georgi Rakovski, *Săchineniya*, ed. Kiril Topalov, vol. 1 (Sofia: Bălgarski pisatel, 1983), 385.

²⁵ “Dimităr Miladinov do Aleksandăr Ekzarh, 20 avgust 1952, Bitola,” in *Văzrozhdenski stranitsi*, 454–455.

²⁶ Ivan Bogorov, “Nyakolko dumi za bashtiniy nash ezik,” in *Văzrozhdenski stranitsi*, 366–370, esp. 366 (first published in *Knigovishte za prochtane*, 1874, no. 1).

that the modernizing European influence (ideas, fashions and urban way of life known as *alafranga*, meaning “in the French way”) filtered to the Bulgarians, enhancing the Hellenizing influence in the process but also provoking a conservative reaction.²⁷ The emergence of Greek liberation ideology also made a strong impact upon the Bulgarians.

Greek influence and Christian solidarity within the Orthodox *millet* reached its peak in the Greek uprising of 1821 and the subsequent War of Independence. This was preceded and prepared by the revolutionary activities of Rigas Velestinlis (1757–1798), who was, incidentally, an ethnic Vlach. The Greek republic he planned had to extend across the entire Balkans (and Asia Minor) and be established on the principles of liberty, fraternity and equality of all citizens, irrespective of ethnicity or creed (as proclaimed by the French Revolution).²⁸ The official language had to be Greek, reflecting its prestige and position as *lingua franca* at the time rather than designs to assimilate the non-Greeks. The liberation had to be achieved by organized revolutionary struggle with the participation of all subject peoples, including ordinary Turks. Rigas would later be claimed for both the Megali idea (his republic had to be unitary and Greek in name and language) and for the idea of Balkan solidarity and collaboration (crowned with a federation).²⁹ The Greek revolutionary activities were continued by the multiethnic organization Philiki Hetaireia (Society of Friends), created in Odessa in 1814 along Masonic lines. Though it did not have precise ideas about the future state, its revolutionary network included people from various ethnic groups and clearly aimed at an

²⁷ See Raymond Detrez, “Between the Ottoman Legacy and the Temptation of the West: Bulgarians Coming to Terms with the Greeks,” in *Europe and the Historical Legacies in the Balkans*, eds. Raymond Detrez and Barbara Segärt (P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2008), 35–50; Nikolay Genchev, *Frantsiya v bălgarskoto duhovno vāzrazhdane* (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo “Sv. Kliment Ohridski,” 1979), 396.

²⁸ Rigas Feraios was of Vlach origin and was born in 1857 in Velestino in Thessaly (hence, he was also known as Velestinlis). He was influenced by the French Revolution in his ideas of liberation and the establishment of a state on civic principles. He wrote a patriotic battle hymn (“Thourios”) and a project for a constitution and created a secret organization. He (along with some associates) was handed over by the Austrian authorities for subversive activities to the Turks and murdered in a Turkish prison in 1798.

²⁹ An interpretation of his ideas that steers a middle course between the Megali idea and “uniting the Balkan peoples” is in Leften Stavrianos, *Balkan Federation: A History of the Movement toward Balkan Unity in Modern Times* (Northampton, MA, 1944), 35–36. For the various interpretations, see Vārbān Todorov, *Greek Federalism during the 19th Century: Ideas and Projects* (Boulder, CO: East European Quarterly, 1995; distributed by Columbia University Press), 5–9.

all-Balkan rising.³⁰ Many Bulgarians participated in the Greek secret network Zavera (literally: "For the Faith") of 1821, as evidenced by the wave of Turkish reprisals against Bulgarian notables and the suicide of others.³¹ Whole Bulgarian detachments took part in the Greek uprising in Wallachia and Moldavia in 1821. Many Bulgarians and still more Vlachs and Albanians took part in the ensuing War of Independence (1821–1829) in mainland Greece and fought for Greek freedom. Some eventually settled as citizens in the free Greek kingdom (and applied for land and pensions there).³² A Thraco-Bulgaro-Serbian committee was set up in 1843, chaired by the hero of the Greek Revolution Hadzhi Hristo from Voden, who entered the Greek National Assembly as representative of the "Thrace-Bulgarians and Serbs."

In hindsight, Bulgarian participation in what would become the Greek Revolution was interpreted by national activists such as Rakovski (and some historians) as naive and misguided, attesting to the immaturity of the national consciousness and misused by the Greeks to advance their own goals.³³ Also misleading is the interpretation of the phenomenon in terms of "assistance" to the Greeks or "Balkan solidarity" with them, because this presupposes an already accomplished national formation.³⁴

³⁰ Nadya Danova, *Natsionalniyat vāpros v grātskite politicheski programi prez XIX vek* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1980), 45–51.

³¹ Seliminski, "Istoricheski spomen," 321–313; Ivan Seliminski, *Biblioteka "D-r Ivan Seliminski,"* book 1 (Sofia, 1904), 42; book 2 (Sofia, 1904), 69; book 5 (Sofia, 1907), 14; book 9, Sofia, 1928, 56. Also the historians Petār Nikov, *Vāzrazhdane na bālgarskiya narod. Tsārkovno-natsionalni borbi i postizheniya* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1971), 62. According to this author, national self-awareness had not yet crystallized and was confused "with internationalism on a religious basis."

³² Nikolay Todorov and Veselin Traykov, *Bālgari uchastnitsi v borbite za osvobozhdenie na Gārtsiya, 1821–1828* (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na BAN, 1971). A total of 730 Bulgarian participants are documented by name (563 in Greek documents, 167 in Russian documents), but many may have gone unrecorded, and some of those in the documents are not mentioned by name.

³³ Georgi Rakovski, "Politicheskite otnosheniya srābskago knyazhestva s Bālgariya v dнешnite vremena," in *Bālgarite i sāsednite narodi v publitsistikata na Rakovski, Karavelov, Botev, Yavorov*, ed. Ivan Nikolov (Sofia: Makedoniya Press, 1996), 10–16, esp. 14 (reprinted from *Bādashtnost*, Belgrade, end of Summer, 1963); Georgi Rakovski, "Bālgarski veroizpoveden vāpros s fanariotite i golyamaya mechtainaya ideya panelinizma," in Georgi Rakovski, *Sāchineniya*, vol. 3, ed. Veselin Traykov (Sofia, Bālgarski pisatel, 1984, first published in 1864), 318–365, esp. 354–355. From the literary historians in a similar sense Penev, *Istoriya na novata*, vol. 3 (Sofia, 1933), 64–65.

³⁴ For example in Veselin Traykov, "Uchastieto na bālgarite v natsionalno-osvoboditelnite borbi na drugite balkanski narodi," in *Bālgarskata natsiya prez Vāzrazhdaneto*, vol. 1, ed. Hristo Hristov (Sofia: BAN, 1980), 338–359, esp. 351–352; Todorov, Traykov, *Bālgari*

Obviously, national consciousness was then underdeveloped among the Bulgarians, and fighting the common Muslim enemy on the basis of creed took precedence, possibly with the hope of liberation of one's own fatherland (as well as thirst for adventure and/or revenge).

The natural and voluntary cultural assimilation lasted until the 1830s. After that it was increasingly felt as a threat and counteracted by the emerging Bulgarian national activists and intellectuals. In fact, Hellenization continued long afterwards in many places. But there was no longer an uninhibited attitude towards it, and a different value standard was introduced that viewed it as national apostasy. The educated elites abruptly turned away from Greek influence in the 1840s and reoriented themselves toward Russia (and direct links with the West), and the decades that followed saw increased animosity and embittered strife between Bulgarian and Greek national activists. One may ask why the habitual Greek cultural and intellectual dominance became unbearable and provoked a Bulgarian reaction. In other words: how did Bulgarian nationalism emerge? What sparked it?

Various demographic, economic and social explanations for the abrupt change have been put forward. First, there was a demographic boom and an increase in the Bulgarian population (which, on closer inspection, turns to be not so strong and not restricted to the Bulgarians). Second, many towns became more Bulgarian, as unrest at the turn of the eighteenth century drove the Bulgarian peasant population toward the towns looking for refuge. Third, purely Bulgarian urban centers developed in the mountainous areas on both sides of the Balkan range; Bulgarian handicrafts arose in these towns, and the local artisans formed guilds. Fourth, this ascending social group made increasingly self-confident efforts to participate in communal affairs; hence a conflict (in the older towns) arose with the Greek nucleus and Graecized "old urbanites" led by their traditional notables, as well as a conflict between a new Bulgarian commercial bourgeoisie and the older Greek or Graecized one, and finally, economic competition and social and cultural confrontation emerged between them. In a nutshell: the new Bulgarian urban dwellers of peasant stock, still connected with the conservative peasant tradition and organized around guilds, church and school boards, came into conflict with the old Greek or Graecized

uchastnitsi. Rakovski himself noted that at first the Bulgarians were fighting enthusiastically for the Serb and the Greek cause: Rakovski, "Politicheskite otnosheniya," 14.

urban elites and embarked upon an anti-Greek course.³⁵ Or in a sort of Marxist explanation: after a certain point, the rising Bulgarian “bourgeoisie” was not content to play junior partner to the Greek bourgeoisie and set out to overthrow Greek tutelage and navigate under its own flag. This happened during the Tanzimat (reform) era initiated by the Hatt-ı Şerif of 1839, which encouraged the Bulgarians to put forth their claims, and especially after the Crimean War (1853–1856), which opened the empire to European economic penetration and facilitated access to Europe.³⁶ What is mentioned less often is that, after the Greek Revolution and the establishment of the Greek state, the Greeks who remained in the empire experienced a temporary setback that benefited the Bulgarian craftsmen and traders. An ideological phenomenon such as the rise of (Bulgarian) nationalism can be only partially explained by such socioeconomic factors and conditions. Why and how would the socioeconomic conflict between (rising) Bulgarian social groups and (established) Greek elites assume a national dimension? To this and the particular circumstances that shaped Bulgarian nationalism I now turn. This is where personalities and their life experiences come to the foreground.

The Igniting of Bulgarian Nationalism

The first generation of modern Bulgarian intelligentsia (until the 1840s) was educated in Greek schools—more precisely, in the famous Greek schools providing education at a higher level.³⁷ From the Greek schools came the first champions of education in the native tongue and of Bulgarian literature, the activists in the struggle for an autonomous Bulgar-

³⁵ According to Miroslav Hroch a social (group) conflict of interests capable of assuming a national dimension (what he also calls “factor x”) was necessary for national propaganda to generate a mass response in nation-building processes of non-dominant ethnic groups (or “small nations”). See Miroslav Hroch, “Real and Constructed: The Nature of the Nation,” in *The State of the Nation*, ed. J.A. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 91–106 (reprinted in Miroslav Hroch, *Comparative Studies in Modern European History* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Variorum, 2007), esp. 100–101; Miroslav Hroch, “How Much Does Nation Formation Depend on Nationalism?” *East European Politics and Societies* (1990), no. 41, 101–115 (reprinted in Miroslav Hroch, *Comparative Studies*, 110–111). In the Bulgarian case the conflict was the one described above, plus another between educated Bulgarians and established (especially Greek) elites, as will be seen in the next section.

³⁶ Hristo Gandev, *Ranno vāzrazhdane, 1700–1860* (Sofia, 1939), 53–92; Gandev, “Faktori na bālgarskoto,” 90–107; Gandev, “Zakonomernosti,” 49–51; Zina Markova, *Bālgarskoto tsārkovno-natsionalno dvizhenie do Krimskata voina* (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na BAN, 1976), 74–78.

³⁷ About the Greek schools, see Chassiotis, *L'instruction*.

ian Church and the first major national revolutionary (Georgi Stoykov Rakovski).

Greek education, as the most accessible modern education in the Ottoman Empire, introduced the Bulgarians (and other subject peoples) to contemporary European ideas and scholarship. The atmosphere is described by the Greek-educated (in Kydonies and the University of Athens) Ivan Seliminski, prominent representative of the Bulgarian Enlightenment:

The new scholarship [in the famous Greek schools of Kydonies, Smyrna and Chios] electrified everyone, especially the souls of the younger. It spread like lightning in our fatherland as well [...] Upon finishing their studies in these schools, the Bulgarians returned to Bulgaria and spread the enlightening rays among their compatriots, everyone according to his abilities. The lessons in physics, the chemical experiments in class, the new horizon of knowledge before the students' eyes, the lessons in higher mathematics, etc., roused in the students' souls an irresistible inclination towards science. New ideas coming from Europe spread among the youth and through it among the people." And again: "Youth from all Christian nations streamed into the aforementioned schools. The young men showed extraordinary success there in their studies. And when they returned to the various parts of their fatherland, they propagated the astonishing fruits of education and exposed the evils that derive from ignorance and lack of knowledge. The young educated generation gradually enlightened everyone and demonstrated the natural destiny of man. In accordance with its education and its mission, it fulfilled, in an exemplary way, its duty to the fatherland and to the entire people (*narod*)."³⁸

The young Bulgarians in these schools (and in the Greek milieu in general) came in contact not only with contemporary European achievements but also with the earlier Greek nationalism. The Greeks tutored them in national sentiment as well, and it was from them that they learned to treasure their native land and their own people. To quote Seliminski again, in an 1841 letter (with a touch of envy): "One admires Greek patriotism. Their enthusiasm knows no limits. Young and old think only of extending borders, of Hellenizing the others, of enlightening their fatherland, and their generous subsidies flow from everywhere. We see how gloriously the Greeks make use of their wealth. All are competing in national philanthropy, if not to be first, not to be last either."³⁹

³⁸ Seliminski, *Biblioteka "D-r Ivan Seliminski,"* vol. 2 (Sofia, 1904), citations on 20–21, 24, translation mine, R.D.

³⁹ Ivan Seliminski, "Do g-n Vasil Aprilov, 15 yuli, 1841 g." in Seliminski, *Izbrani sǎchineniya*, 359, translation mine, R.D.

The Greek teachers, precisely the most enlightened and advanced, were deeply patriotic and proud of the Greek (Hellenic) past and culture. They extolled the beauty of the Greek language, the character and civic virtues of the ancient Greeks and their heroic deeds for the fatherland. By implicitly or even explicitly comparing the ancient Greeks with the “enslaved” modern Greeks, subjugated to a “tyranny,” they fostered patriotic feelings and a spirit of rebellion.⁴⁰ The Bulgarian students directly absorbed the national ideas and values and applied them to their nation in the sense that the Bulgarians, too, had a glorious past (kings and patriarchs, victories over their enemies), that they also had an ancient language, a valuable national character and peculiar customs, and that it was their “sacred duty” to protect and promote them.⁴¹ Such an example comes from the memoirs of Yoakim Gruev, who admits that while studying in the Greek school in Plovdiv (Philippoupolis), he admired the ancient Hellenes’ achievements in the sciences and arts and their feats of valor. Not to be outdone, he concocted similar, albeit imaginary stories about Bulgarian kings and heroes and read them to his Greek schoolmates.⁴²

The outstanding role of Hellenism in arousing Bulgarian national feeling is recognized by the prominent Bulgarian Enlightenment figure Marko Balabanov in his tribute to Gavril Krăstevich, another Greek-school graduate and activist of the Church struggles:

Greek patriotism was taken as an example. The newly created Greek kingdom woke, enlivened and strengthened even more the development of this Bulgarian patriotism. More than a handful of Bulgarians, educated in Greek, emerged as ardent Bulgarian patriots and fervent advocates for the advancement of their people, even if they often used not the Bulgarian, but the Greek language. And just as the Greeks expected their political revival would stem from a preceding intellectual revival, these Bulgarian patriots, based on the Greek example, believed that the intellectual revival would in time bring about the political revival of their people, and they worked toward that.⁴³ (This is also an example of adapting the ideas of Adamantios Korais to the Bulgarian cause.)

⁴⁰ Examples of such patriotic teachers (Lambros Photiadis, Genadios), especially when teaching Greek language and literature, appear in Chassiotis, *L'instruction*, 104–105, 126–127. They also recited heroic verses and staged heroic dramas.

⁴¹ In this sense Raymond Detrez, *Krivolitsi na misǎlta* (Sofia: LIK, 2001; originally published as *Grigor Parlicev. Een Casestudy in Balkan Nationalisme*), 99–100. Also Penev, *Istoriya na novata*, vol. 4, part 1 (Sofia, 1936), 689.

⁴² Yoakim Gruev, *Moite spomeni* (Plovdiv, 1906), 4.

⁴³ Marko Balabanov, *Gavril Krăstovich*, 32 (translation mine, R.D.), also 25 on the reception of Adamantios Korais's idea that an intellectual revival should precede political liberation.

The inspiring role of Hellenism in fostering Bulgarian patriotism was also noted by foreigners such as the traveler Cyprien Robert in 1844: "It has to be said in favor of Hellenism that the best patriots in Bulgaria are among the Philhellenes. Everywhere that the Greek influence is more directly at work, the Bulgarian has a more alive and more specific feeling of his dignity."⁴⁴

A good illustration of how the Bulgarians learned patriotism from the Greek schools and teachers is the testimonies and subsequent careers of those who studied in the school of the famous Greek enlightener and patriot (and follower of Korais) Theophilos Kairis on the island of Andros in 1836–1839. What he told his students about the greatness of Hellenism and the rise of Hellas, his Bulgarian students "understood and adapted to the revival and the greatness of Bulgaria." They later said that they learned from the Greek school "to protect us against the foreign and treasure and love our own."⁴⁵ One of these students—the national activist Stoyan Chomakov—retorted to the Greeks in the heat of the Church struggles: "It is from you that I learned that one should love the fatherland."⁴⁶

According to prominent national activist and journalist Ivan Dobrovski, who came from the same school of Andros (and was later interviewed by literary historian Ivan Shishmanov), he and his friends interpreted Korais's idea that a successful education required teaching in the vernacular, and not in old Greek, to mean that the Bulgarian people should also be educated in its mother tongue, not in Greek. In other words, the primary concern here is Greek, not "Old Bulgarian" (that is, Church Slavonic). Furthermore, they thought that in order to do this, the Greek clergy (which would stand in the way of such reform) had to be expelled and replaced with a Bulgarian one. Hence they also raised the question of an independent Bulgarian Church, a question that would later become dominant.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Robert, *Les Slaves de Turquie*, 324. The German historian G.G. Gervinus makes a similar observation in *Régénération de la Grèce*, 130.

⁴⁵ The citation is a commentary of Stefan Bobchev to memories of Bulgarian students of Kairis. See Stefan S. Bobchev, "Pregled na bălgarskiya periodichen pechat, 1844–1894," in *Yubileen sbornik po sluchay petdesetgodishninata na bălgarskata zhurnalistika i chestvuvaneto pametta na osnovatelya i Konstantin Fotinov* (Sofia, 1894), 5–116, esp. 25.

⁴⁶ Mihail Arnaudov, *Seliminski. Zhivot, delo, idei, 1799–1867* (Sofia: BAN, 1938), 196.

⁴⁷ Ivan Shishmanov, "Konstantin G. Fotinov, negoviyat zhivot i negovata deynost," in *Sbornik NUNK* 11 (1894), 591–763, esp. 642; Ivan Shishmanov, "Ivan Dobrovski," in Shishmanov, *Izbrani săchineniya*, vol. 1, 298–332 (first published in *Bălgarski pregled* 3, 1896, 139–186), 313–314. For greater detail and critical reflections on the subject, see Nadya Danova, *Ivan Dobrovski v perspektivata na bălgarskiya XIX vek* (Sofia: Valentin Trayanov, 2008), 504–510.

The students of Theophilos Kairis in Andros formed a patriotic circle (the Slav-Bulgarian Study-Loving Society) around Ivan Dobrovski. The circle read Slavic books and cultivated a patriotic spirit among its young members, who resolved to work toward the Bulgarians' national awakening through education. These activities deeply impacted the subsequent career of some participants, who became prominent national activists in the Church struggles. Among the members of the circle were Stoyan Mihaylovski, a future leader of the Church struggle (and future Bishop Ilarion Makariopolski); Stoyan Chomakov, also prominent in the Church struggles and one of the "radicals"; Zahari Strumski, who graduated in medicine and became another activist in the Church struggles; Georgi Atanasovich, who became a medical doctor in Bucharest and was active in the political life of the Bulgarian émigré community; and Georgi Papa Iliev (who went by the pseudonym Busilin), who later studied in Moscow University and became a man of letters. The school was closed in 1839 because Kairis elaborated a religious teaching (known as Theosevia) that was declared heretical by the Greek Synod, and some of the Bulgarian students continued their studies in Athens.⁴⁸ The young Bulgarian national activists in Constantinople affirmed that their patriotism had been inspired by their compatriots, who came from Greece—more specifically, from Andros.⁴⁹

Another Bulgarian patriotic circle of this sort was formed around Ivan Seliminski (then a student of medicine) at the University of Athens around 1840 with some of the former students from Andros and former participants in the Greek Revolution. It sought to contribute to the advancement of the Bulgarian people by promoting education in the native tongue and working toward a Bulgarian Church. By then Seliminski had turned his hopes toward Russia (under the influence of Vasil Aprilov) and tried to convince young Bulgarians to go there for studies and to look to Russia for liberation.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ About the Andros society, see Shishmanov, "Ivan Dobrovski," 311–316. Also Arnautov, *Seliminski*, 194–196. For details on the circle of students in Andros and its influence on the subsequent careers of its members, see Danova, *Ivan Dobrovski*, 121–132, 135–136, 500–513.

⁴⁹ Dobrovski said this to Shishmanov. See Shishmanov, "Dobrovski," 320; Danova, *Ivan Dobrovski*, 513–514.

⁵⁰ Ivan Seliminski, "Religiyata, duhovenstvoto i tsarkovniyat vāpros," in Seliminski, *Izbrani sāchineniya*, 85–103 (written in 1860), esp. 95. See also Arnautov, *Seliminski*, 194, 197. About the circle in Athens see, most recently, Danova, *Ivan Dobrovski*, 132–135.

Greek nationalism stimulated Bulgarian national feeling not only directly, by its own example. It reinforced it in a negative way by arousing resistance and revolt. Some Greek teachers and scholars were not only excessively proud of the ancient Hellenes but contemptuous of the other Balkan peoples, particularly the Bulgarians. The Bulgarians were looked down upon, scorned and exposed to insults and humiliation regarding their ethnicity; they were urged to renounce it and to embrace noble Greekness. The consequences are well-documented. Stoyan Chomakov, a prominent activist of the Bulgarian Church movement, admitted that his patriotism was sparked precisely when his Greek history teacher in Andros (Theophilos Kairis) spoke with hatred and disgust about the (Balkan) Slavs and stressed the need to assimilate them into the Greek nation (if we can believe Seliminski, the teacher called them *sclavi*, or slaves, instead of *slavi*, or Slavs). Chomakov was deeply upset to hear his Greek fellow students wish for a future in which the whole peninsula would be Greek and the “barbarian” Albanians, Vlachs and Bulgarians would be fused with the noble Greek element.⁵¹ The nationalistic atmosphere in Athens, with its fevered calls for spreading Greek cultural influence over the whole peninsula, aroused particularly strong resistance from the Bulgarian students there.⁵²

Another example is provided by the Bulgarian national “awakener” and literary figure Grigor Pärlichev from Ohrid, who won the Greek poetic competition Ralion in Athens in 1860 with his epic “Armatolos.” In his autobiography he writes about the anger and humiliation he felt when his fellow students from the University of Athens ridiculed Bulgarian master-masons from Kostur, calling them “oxen.”⁵³ He inferred that the Bulgarians had been scorned and abused enough by other nationalities and that it was high time for them to become aware of themselves and, instead of despising themselves self-defeatingly, to become confident of their abilities and rely on their hard work to achieve progress.⁵⁴ Obviously many Bulgarians had negative experiences with Greek national pride, combined

⁵¹ See the testimony of Stoyan Chomakov in Atanas Shopov, “Iz detinstvoto na d-r Stoyan Chomakov,” *Duhovna kultura* no. 15 (1922), 20. Also a letter to Vasil Aprilov by Seliminski, “Do g-n Vasil Aprilov,” 348. See also Arnaudov, *Seliminski*, 196. Danya Danova has reservations about the veracity of Kairis’s anti-Slavic and anti-Bulgarian sentiments, though she points to the “hypertrophy” of his national pride. See Danova, *Ivan Dobrovski*, 500–501.

⁵² Shopov, “Iz detinstvoto,” 21.

⁵³ Pärlichev, “Avtobiografiya,” 225.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 229–230.

with Greek scorn for the others, which led them to reject Greekness and affirm their own national identity.

The prominent Greek enlightener Neophytos Doukas announced his Hellenizing aspirations in writing as well. He published a Greek grammar in 1804, in which he insisted that Greek teachers should work consistently to Hellenize the non-Greek peoples and thus civilize them. He also published (in 1815) a letter to the Patriarch of Constantinople, where he appealed to the Church to undertake the Hellenization of the Christian peoples in the Balkans and Asia Minor. His Hellenizing aspirations also found expression in his introduction to the works of Demosthenes.⁵⁵ These published works were accessible to the Bulgarians educated in Greek and did not go unnoticed or unchallenged.⁵⁶ While negative images of and attitudes toward the Bulgarians were not characteristic of Greek Enlightenment intellectuals and of the era in general (the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries), Bulgarians were habitually looked down upon as uneducated and unrefined peasants with an inferior language, despite being “brothers” in faith (and of the same Christian *genos*).⁵⁷

First in the Balkans and based on a claim to a brilliant ancient past, Greek nationalism was an expression of overblown self-confidence and a feeling of superiority, accompanied by disparagement of the ethnic others, including Bulgarians. The latter were regarded as the opposite of the civilized “Hellenes” (fusing ancient Hellenes with contemporary Greeks), as “barbarians” or “thick-headed” (*hondrokephaloi*) people that had to be Hellenized and thus civilized (fusing old and new again). What might have begun as social demarcation and distancing from the illiterate peasants (*horiates*) turned into a stigmatizing ethnic and national marker. Conversely, and by way of response, haughtiness and arrogance became fixed as part of the Bulgarian image of the Greeks, developed in this era by key Bulgarian national activists.⁵⁸ A nationalism of this missionary

⁵⁵ Danova, *Ivan Dobrovski*, 98, 401.

⁵⁶ Douka's Hellenizing aspirations in his introduction to the works of Demosthenes were exposed, for example, by Rakovski, *Săchineniŭa*, vol. 1, 391.

⁵⁷ Nadya Danova, “Bălgarite v grătskata knizhnina prez XVIII i nachaloto na XIX vek,” *Balkanistika*, no. 1 (1986), 252–271; Dimitris Livanios, “Christians, Heroes and Barbarians: Serbs and Bulgarians in the Modern Greek Historical Imagination (1602–1950),” in *Greece and the Balkans: Identities, Perceptions and Cultural Encounters since the Enlightenment*, ed. Dimitris Tziouvas (Ashgate, 2003), 68–83, esp. 71–75.

⁵⁸ This starts with Paisiy; similar characteristics are to be found in Seliminski, Rakovski, Slaveykov and many others. About the image of the Greeks with Bulgarian authors, see Nadya Danova, “Obrazăt na gărtsite, sərbite, albantsite i rumăntsiti v bălgarskata knizhnina,” in *Vrăzki na săvmestimost i nesăvmestimost mezhdu hristiyani i myusyulmani*

(civilizing) variety, with its assimilative aspirations and territorial claims, was experienced by the ethnic others as so much arrogance and pretense. Instead of acting unobtrusively, it humiliated and irritated. It did not consider the psychological reaction of the vulnerable Other to insults and abuse. In the end it proved self-defeating. It contributed greatly to the rise of a strong Bulgarian nationalism in reaction to, and as rejection of, the stigma. Nationalism that arose psychologically from humiliation, anger and resentment was bound to be defensive, at least in the beginning, drawing power from hiding and disguising an inferiority complex, at times strongly moralistic and convinced of its "justice." (This nationalism would later go on the offensive.)

Paisiy of Hilendar made the first attempt to convert the feeling of shame, humiliation and inferiority into its opposite—self-confidence and pride. Not only did he reveal a glorious Bulgarian history, he also devalued (in the book's introduction) Greek traits and qualities (such as erudition, culture and polished manners) and celebrated the Bulgarian "simplicity and lack of malice," generosity and hospitality. The Bulgarians are simple plowers, shepherds and artisans, while the Greeks are traders and learned people, wrote Paisiy—but God loves plowers and shepherds and not cunning and arrogant people.⁵⁹

A number of Bulgarian graduates of the Greek schools experienced a dramatic turn (a kind of conversion) from an advanced Hellenization towards Bulgarian consciousness and identity, accompanied by a sharp (compensatory) rejection of Greek education and culture. The drama was enhanced by the fact that they could not always master the Bulgarian literary language, which was then in a process of formation. In the mid-1860s the aforementioned Grigor Pärlichev, deeply Hellenized author of the award-winning Greek poem "Armatolos," became an ardent Bulgarian patriot.⁶⁰ But he could not master the literary Bulgarian language, which exposed him to ridicule and eventually led him to stop identifying as

ν *Bălgariya* (Sofia: Mezhdunaroden tsentăr po problemite na maltsinstavata i kulturnite vzaimodeystviya, 1996), 57–135.

⁵⁹ Paisiy Hilendarski, *Istoriya Slavenobolgarskaya*, ed. Petăr Dinekov (Sofia, 1972), 41–42. About the Bulgarian nationalism of *ressentiment*, see Roumen Daskalov, "Natsiya, natsionalna ideya, natsionalizăm i nie," in Roumen Daskalov, *Mezhduraznitsa i Zapada. Bălgarski kulturni dilemi* (Sofia: LIK, 1998), 187–225, esp. 216–217. See also Nadya Danova, *Upotreba na emotsiite: pogled vărhu bălgarskite tekstove do sredata na XIX vek*. The manuscript was kindly provided to me by the author.

⁶⁰ Detrez, *Krivotitsi*, esp. 87–101, 150–152. The book presents a detailed study of Grigor Pärlichev's changing self-identification.

Bulgarian.⁶¹ Bulgarian merchant Vasil Aprilov, a Hellenophile who sponsored Greek education in Odessa, turned into a staunch Bulgarian patriot in 1831, after reading Yuriy Venelin's 1829 book *Drevnie i nyneshnie bolgare* (Bulgarians of Old and Today).⁶² He then became the major figure in promoting modern Bulgarian education and simultaneously reorienting the Bulgarians toward Russia.

The Greek-educated Bulgarian enlightener Ivan Seliminski also came to reject Greek influence and culture and turned toward Russia, though it was too late for him to learn literary Bulgarian. He agreed with Vasil Aprilov that study in Greek schools Hellenized the youth and alienated it from its native society, thus cutting it off from its relatives and its nation, though he himself was an example of the contrary. One can imagine his painful self-consciousness and frustration at not being able to express himself well in Bulgarian and having to fight for the Bulgarian national cause in the Greek language (in fact, his works remained unknown and made no impact at the time) and thus feeling estranged from his compatriots. As he put it: "I deserve to be pitied because I became aware of my delusion too late, and I do not have time to correct it. What remorse I feel!"⁶³

Dimităr Miladinov, a Hellenist teacher in Macedonia (whose mother was probably Vlach), turned from "apathy" to ardent patriotism and became an apostle of Bulgarianism in Macedonia around 1855. He expressed his frustration over not mastering the Bulgarian literary language in a letter to notables from Kukush dated October 24, 1857: "Oh, how ashamed I am to express to you my Slav feelings in Greek and that it was not long ago that I started to read, write and understand Slavic."⁶⁴ This sentiment is echoed by Kiriyak Dărzhilovich from the village of Dărzhilovo near Voden, in a letter to Georgi Rakovski: "I feel a lot of grief that although I am Bulgarian, I cannot write in Bulgarian."⁶⁵ (Even so, he was able to learn to write in Bulgarian in later years.)

⁶¹ Detrez, *Krivolitsi*, 174–183, 229–234.

⁶² Mihail Arnaudov, *Vasil Evstatiev Aprilov. Zhivot, deynost, săvremennitsi, 1789–1847* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1971), esp. 112–123.

⁶³ Ivan Seliminski, "Do G. Zolotovich ot 24 noemvri 1843 g." in Seliminski, *Izbrani săchineniya*, 372–386, citation on p. 384.

⁶⁴ Dimităr Miladinov, "Do bălgarskite pārventsi v Kukush, Struga, 24 oktomvri, 1857," in *Bratya Miladinovi. Prepiska*, ed. Nikola Traykov (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na BAN, 1964), 37–40, esp. 39. About his "conversion" into a Bulgarian patriot, Mihail Arnaudov, *Bratya Miladinovi. Zhivot i deynost, 1810, 1830–1868* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1969), 49–53; Penev, *Istoriya na novata*, vol. 4, part 1, 692–693.

⁶⁵ Quoted from Veselin Traykov, *Rakovski i balkanskite narodi* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1971), 355.

Such figures were, as historian Mihail Arnaudov put it, “representatives of an international interchange, of a Balkan cultural osmosis” in educational and revolutionary endeavors shared by Bulgarians and Greeks. But the osmosis did not reach a balance, and the two groups did not meld. Instead a process of differentiation occurred, driven by the same individuals who had initially immersed themselves in the “Greek sea.”⁶⁶

Their mastery of the Greek language and their immersion in Greek culture created for those people the problem of identity, especially if they could not master the emerging Bulgarian literary language. For intellectuals like them, the possibility to express oneself freely in the native tongue was essential. They must have felt their (regained or newly acquired) Bulgarian identity was incomplete and impaired. Their strong “investment” and assimilation in Greek language and culture pitted them against themselves and their acquired identity (insofar as they had also absorbed “Greekness”). It frustrated them that they struggled to extricate themselves from the Greek influence as they preached Bulgarian patriotism to others. Thus Pärlichev from Ohrid reacted against his Bulgarian literary critics (of his translation of Homer’s *Iliad* into Bulgarian) by withdrawing into an alternative Macedonian regional identity, a kind of Macedonian particularism. Seliminski (from Sliven) did not have this option and reacted (to Vasil Aprilov’s critique of Greek education) by suppressing his own self-esteem and pride and embracing the pro-Russian orientation propagated by Aprilov. Aprilov himself did not have such an acute problem, because he lived in Odessa and had adopted the Russian language and culture, toward which he strove to reorient the Bulgarians.

The value of the Greek language, education and culture (implicitly: for the Bulgarians) became bitterly contested by Bulgarian intellectuals trying to extricate themselves from Greek influence, which they regarded as an acute threat of assimilation. A shared culture long regarded as beneficial suddenly seemed harmful. Vasil Aprilov insisted that by attending Greek schools, young Bulgarian men were jeopardizing their national consciousness and would be lost to their compatriots.⁶⁷ Ivan Seliminski agreed.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Arnaudov, *Seliminski*, 4.

⁶⁷ Aprilov, “Dennitsa,” 122–123, 318–319.

⁶⁸ Seliminski studied in Kydonies (Ayvalık) and at the University of Athens and was initially an ardent supporter of Greek education and culture. Later, however, he turned into an even stronger opponent, denying that Greek schools, language and culture played any positive role for Bulgarians. His anti-Greek feelings find expression in Seliminski, *Biblioteka “Dr. Ivan Seliminski,”* vol. 3 (Sofia, 1905), 56–61; Seliminski, “Do G. Zolotovich, 24 noemvri, 1843,” esp. 382–386.

Grigor Pärlichev went so far as to deny the value of even classical Greek literature.⁶⁹ Neofit Bozveli, who graduated from a Greek school and fought passionately for an autonomous Bulgarian Church, grew intolerant in the heat of the struggles and spoke out against the use of the Greek language in Bulgarian education and literature (*knizhnina*) and against Greek influence altogether (in his *Mati Bolgariya*).⁷⁰ Petko Slaveykov, an activist of the Church struggles and perhaps the most popular Bulgarian journalist and writer of the era, argued that the Greek language and education were good only for the Greeks, while the Bulgarians needed education and literature in their own language.⁷¹ This was an expression of a radical (“revolutionary”) trend, originating with Paisiy, to drive the threatening Greek influence out of the Bulgarian intellectual sphere and public life; to that end it had to be presented as worthless and harmful.⁷² In fact, most Bulgarian intellectuals felt compelled to take a stand on the “usefulness” or “harm” of the Greek language and education for Bulgarians.

On the other hand, there were Bulgarian Hellenists (here meaning teachers in Greek) who preserved to the end their high esteem for the Greek language and culture, such as Rayno Popovich, Neofit Rilski, Hristaki Pavlovich, Dimităr Miladinov and the journalist Ivan Bogorov. They recommended the study of Greek, on the grounds not only that it was used in commerce, but also that Greek schools were more advanced and that Greek books and journals provided access to the modern sciences (*epistimi*) and ideas. This was the case with Neofit Rilski, in the introduction to his 1835 handbook of Greek, and with his friend Rayno Popovich, in the introduction to his 1837 manual of etiquette and morals *Hristoiitiya ili blagovernavie* (Good Manners) (actually a translation from Greek of a book by an Italian author).⁷³ It is worth noting that they recommended the study of

⁶⁹ Detrez, *Krivolitsi*, 143–145 (these are unpublished texts, but used in his propaganda).

⁷⁰ Neofit Bozveli, “Plach mati Bolgarii,” in *Văzrozhdenski stranitsi*, vol. 1, 107–134, esp. 126–134. An appeal is made here for “enlightenment” and liturgy in the Slav mother tongue (which, it is said, should undergo renewal) and against Greek influence. See also Penev, *Istoriya na novata*, vol. 3, 751; Danova, “Obrazăt na gärtsite,” 79–80. In 1835 Neofit Bozveli and Emanuil Vaskidovich published the textbook *Slavyanobälgarsko detevodstvo* (Slav-Bulgarian Pedagogy), where the Greeks are presented in a very positive light (in vol. 5). But as a leader of the Church struggles in the 1840s, Bozveli turned resolutely against the Greek influence. See Danova, *Ivan Dobrovski*, 393–394.

⁷¹ Petko Slaveykov, “Vsintsa nashi za nas si,” in Slaveykov, *Săchineniya*, vol. 5, 382–385, esp. 384 (from *Makedoniya*, July 15, 1867).

⁷² Ivan Shishmanov, “Konstantin G. Fotinov,” 653.

⁷³ Neofit Rilski, “Predgovor kăm ‘Kratkoe i yasnoe izlozhenie,’” in *Văzrozhdenski stranitsi*, 283–286, esp. 284 (first published in 1835); Rayno Popovich, “Iz Hristoiitiyata,” in *Văzrozhdenski stranitsi*, 287–312, esp. 292 (first published in 1837).

Greek parallel with the study of the mother tongue or immediately after the mother tongue, primarily for higher studies. Also worth noting is that in teaching Greek, the Bulgarian “Hellenists” used Bulgarian for explanations. A similar case was that of the prominent Enlightenment figure and founder of the Bulgarian press Konstantin Fotinov, who lived in Smyrna among Greeks. In spite of his unquestionable patriotism and understanding of the role of the native tongue in education and Church sermons, he did not consider the study of Greek as a threat and retained his esteem and reverence for Greek culture.⁷⁴

In fact, most of the Bulgarian teachers of Greek were sincere patriots, and far from trying to Hellenize their students, they taught them to love their people and their language. This is what Rayno Popovich affirms about his school in Kotel by pointing to the subsequent patriotic career of some of its graduates.⁷⁵ Kuzman Shapkarev, who promoted Bulgarianism in Macedonia, emphasized about the activities of the teachers of Greek in Macedonia (such as the ardent patriot Dimităr Miladinov) that they were deeply patriotic and single-handedly advanced the cause of Bulgarianism there.⁷⁶ With precisely such cases in mind, the literary historian Ivan Shishmanov argued that they regarded Greek education not only as a powerful instrument for raising Bulgarians’ educational and intellectual level, but also as an effective means to counteract Panhellenism by knowledge of its culture.⁷⁷

A symptomatic dispute arose between Vasil Aprilov (in Odessa), who attempted to reorient Bulgarian education toward Russia, and the local Bulgarian teacher of Greek (“Hellenist”) Rayno Popovich, supported by his friend Neofit Rilski, also a teacher of Greek. To the aforementioned arguments on the usefulness of Greek education, Popovich added that the Bulgarians “do not have contact with Russia” and would not have anyone to write and speak with in Russian, while they are “united and inseparable from the Greeks.”⁷⁸ Conversely, Aprilov argued that the Russians were

⁷⁴ Nadya Danova, *Konstantin Georgiev Fotinov v kulturnoto i ideino-politicheskoto razvitiie na Balkanite prez XIX vek* (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na BAN, 1994), esp. 118, 259–260.

⁷⁵ Popovich, “Iz Hristoiitiyata,” 298.

⁷⁶ Kuzman Shapkarev, *Za vāzrazhdaneto na bālgarshtinata v Makedoniya. Neizdadeni zapiski i pisma*, eds. N. Todorov and N. Zhechev (Sofia: Bālgarski pisatel, 1984), 42–44, 106, 393, 484–485. The author argues that the study of Greek does not in itself lead to Hellenization if the teaching is in a Bulgarian spirit.

⁷⁷ Shishmanov, “Znachenie i zaslugi,” 364.

⁷⁸ Popovich, “Iz Hristoiitiyata,” 296–297. Ivan Shishmanov interprets that in the sense that Popovich preferred domestic Bulgarian education (on the Greek model) and that he might have sensed political danger in the Russian orientation. See Shishmanov, “Uvod,” 62.

a kindred Slav people with a deep concern for the other Slavs; that the Bulgarian language should be learned with the help of Russian and Slav books published in Russia; and that Bulgarians should go to study in Russia. He also argued in his letters to Popovich in favor of education in the native language and that books from other languages should be translated into Bulgarian in order to develop the language. Aprilov even accused Popovich of “Graecomania” (madness for things Greek).⁷⁹ In his zeal he obviously tended to equate esteem of anything Greek (language, culture) with “Graecomania” and apostasy. In fact, both sides in this debate shared the opinion that the native tongue should be the basis of education, but since it was not developed at the time (that is, standardized as a literary language) and almost no literature was available in it, they differed on what to use as a mediator—that is, whether it should be Greek or Russian education and “high” culture. This was the crux of the matter, but it reflected different cultural orientations—Greek vs. Russian.

The reaction of Bulgarian intellectuals to Greek cultural influence and the strength of their nationalism depended on a number of personal circumstances and experiences and on temperament. It also depended on locality, travel and exposure to external influences, whether in the centers of the empire (especially Constantinople) or outside—in the newly created Greek kingdom, or in the Bulgarian émigré communities in Wallachia and Moldavia, Russia, Austria-Hungary and elsewhere. Contrary to received historiographical wisdom, the national “awakening” did not start in places where Bulgarian ethnicity was “naturally” preserved and transmitted in the ways and practices of “folk” culture, which was mostly oral, traditional, conservative and religious. Instead, it was just the opposite: national consciousness started in places of exposure and contact with educated and self-confident Greeks, where the Bulgarians saw their identity and dignity downgraded and challenged. Experiences of Greek (higher) schools and life in the nationalistic atmosphere of the newly created Greek kingdom were of primary importance in becoming nationally conscious, as was life in the multiethnic Ottoman capital Constantinople. Conversely, intellectuals in the Bulgarian interior, including the purely Bulgarian small towns on both sides of the Balkan range renowned for their later contribution to the National Revival, were more inclined to compromise. The rich and varied biographies of the pioneers of the Bulgarian national “awakening”

⁷⁹ Aprilov, “Dennitsa,” 47, 123. See also Arnaudov, *Vasil Evstatiev Aprilov*, 230–238, 248–251.

bear witness to this sociological “regularity.” The rejection of Greek influence (denounced as Graecomania) did not occur simultaneously despite the national awakening in the 1840s, and some intellectuals continued to value Greek letters and culture to the end, though they were gradually marginalized by younger patriots with a different educational background.⁸⁰ The circulation of Greek books among Bulgarians can be taken as an indirect indicator of Greek cultural influence. Greek books (original and translated) predominated in the (mostly personal) libraries in Bulgaria during the early period of the National Revival (1801–1840) and made up a large share of the books circulating among the Bulgarians during the later period (1841–1877).⁸¹

There was another category of Bulgarian Hellenists (here in the actual sense of scholars of Greek language and literature) who worked in the field of Greek letters by making translations or producing works of their own, such as Petăr Beron, Nikola Piccolo, Atanas Bogoridi (brother of Stefan Bogoridi, who occupied a high position in the Ottoman government—a Bulgarian Phanariot), Panayot Dobrovski (brother of the aforementioned Ivan Dobrovski) and Atanas Tsankov.⁸² They typically lived outside their native land. Some had a well-attested Bulgarian consciousness, while with others it was weak or nonexistent. Petăr Beron (1795–1871) from Kotel studied at the Greek Princely (so-called Bey) Academy in Bucharest and then graduated in medicine (Heidelberg and Munich), but after working

⁸⁰ On the continuing influence of Greek education and culture, see Danova, *Konstantin Georgi Fotinov*, 366.

⁸¹ Manyu Stoyanov, *Stari grătski knigi v Bălgariya* (Sofia: NBKM, 1978). There are 1,144 titles of Greek books recorded in Bulgarian libraries during the period 1801–1850 and 728 titles for the period 1851–1877. The latter is still a substantial number, though it attests to a declining interest in Greek books as well as a growing interest in Bulgarian books and books in other European languages. The data is aggregated by Nadya Danova, “Marko D. Balabanov i grătskiyat kulturen i ideino-politicheski zhivot prez XIX vek,” *Istoricheski pregled* 42, no. 3 (1986), p. 59.

⁸² On the Bulgarians active in Greek literature, see Stoyanov, *Stari grătski*, 455–476; Manyu Stoyanov, “Bălgari, rabotili v grătskata knizhnina prez XIX vek,” in *Bălgariya v sveta ot drevnostta do nashi dni*, ed. Dimutăr Kosev, vol. 1 (Sofia, Nauka i izkustvo, 1979), 450–460. About the prominent Bulgarian Hellenists, who lived in Greek intellectual milieus abroad and worked in the Hellenic cultural universe, see in detail Janette Sampimon, *Becoming Bulgarian: The Articulation of Bulgarian Identity in the Nineteenth Century in Its International Context; An Intellectual History* (Amsterdam: Pegasus, 2006), 55–91. Sampimon considers also their involvement in the Greek national cause and the manifestations of Bulgarian national consciousness and patriotism among some of them. See also the publication of the Greek writings of the Bulgarian Hellenists in Greek and in Bulgarian translation by Afrodita Aleksieva, *Knizhovno nasledstvo na bălgari na grătski ezik prez XIX vek*, vol. 1, *Originali* (Sofia: Gutenberg, 2011).

for a time as a doctor, he dedicated himself to the sciences and philosophy. He lived in Paris but earned the recognition of his compatriots by composing and publishing, in 1824, a primer in the Bulgarian vernacular for modern Bulgarian secular schools (known as the “fish primer” because its cover featured a picture of a dolphin). In the introduction he promoted the Bell-Lancaster mutual teaching method (with which he became familiar at the Greek Princely Academy in Bucharest in 1820). The primer followed a Greek model, that of Darvaris’s eklogar.

Dr. Nikola Piccolo (1792–1865) from Tărnovo was a student of Konstantinos Vardalachos in the famous Greek Princely Academy in Bucharest and graduated in medicine in Italy (Pisa). For a time he was professor of history on the island of Chios and professor of philosophy in the Ionian Academy on the island of Corfu. Then he held a position in the civil service in Bucharest and, around 1840, settled in Paris. He translated some of Rousseau’s works into Greek and was a close friend and collaborator of Korais. He earned a reputation as an excellent classical philologist but also as an author in modern Greek. Ivan Seliminski blamed him for having renounced his nation and his fatherland and having thus remained *piccolo* (small) for them.⁸³ Piccolo was “vindicated” by later Bulgarian historiography for taking some initiatives in defense of the Bulgarian cause during his last years in Paris after the Crimean War.⁸⁴ His friend Dr. Petăr Protich was also a graduate of a Greek school and similarly graduated in medicine to become a professor of medicine in Bucharest. He wrote patriotic poems in Greek, French and Bulgarian, including a poem dedicated to Nikola Piccolo, whom he describes as a Greek with an Italian name who experienced a change of heart and re-established his links to the motherland.⁸⁵ The lesser-known Anton Tsankov (ca. 1823–1860s) from Svishtov studied at the gymnasium in Athens and became a trader in Vienna and Giurgiu, but he also engaged in literary pursuits: he translated texts into Greek and composed a Bulgarian grammar in German. (His brother Dragan Tsankov was a leader of the Uniate movement in the 1850s and a well-known journalist and politician in independent Bulgaria.) Anton Tsankov’s Bulgarian self-awareness is demonstrated by his support for Ivan Dobrovski’s

⁸³ Ivan Seliminski, *Biblioteka “D-r Ivan Seliminski,”* vol. 1, 83.

⁸⁴ Dr. Nikola Piccolo, *Izsledvaniya i novi material, izdadeni po sluchay 100 godini ot smärtta mu, 1865–1965*, eds. V. Beshevliev, N. Todorov and T. Kirkova (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na BAN, 1968), 5–7, 224–226, 286–290.

⁸⁵ Petăr Protich, *Poesii* (Bucharest, 1872), 20–23.

publishing activities and in his introduction to his Greek translation of a book by the German writer Reich.⁸⁶

But there were Hellenists who did not exhibit a Bulgarian consciousness, such as Atanas (Athanas) Bogoridi and Panayot Dobrovski. Athanas Bogoridi (ca. 1788–1826) from Kotel studied at the Princely Academy in Bucharest under Lambros Photiadis and taught ancient Greek language and literature there for a time, as he developed into an outstanding Hellenist. He then graduated in medicine in Vienna and Würzburg and lived in Vienna and Paris as a medical doctor until his death in 1826. He wrote articles for Greek journals, including the famous *Ermis o logios* (or *Logios Ermis*) (Vienna, 1811–1821), considered a mouthpiece of the Greek Enlightenment and of Korais in particular. He propagated Philhellenism and Enlightenment ideas and became associated with the Hetaerist movement for an all-Balkan rising, which lay the foundations for the uprising of 1821, though he did not take part in the Greek Revolution himself. Among his friends were Adamantios Korais, Nikola(os) Piccolo(s), Stefanos Kanelos and Christodoulos Klonaris, and his erudition and scholarly talents were highly praised by Adamantios Korais and Theoklitos Pharmakidis, who were well aware of his Bulgarian descent but accepted him as “Greek” and as a kindred spirit.⁸⁷ Panayot Dobrovski (1821–before 1896) studied in Bucharest and Geneva, moved to Paris as a collaborator of Firmin Didot for his Greek books and finally became a Greek teacher in Smyrna.

Both of these Hellenists without Bulgarian consciousness are typically maligned by Bulgarian historiography—if they are not simply ignored.⁸⁸ Cases such as theirs are excluded from the realm of national Bulgarian history and from the historians’ area of interest. At worst, they are dismissed as advocates of the Greek cultural hegemony or as learned persons sucked into the whirlwind of Hellenism and lost to their nation. At best, they are included in the larger group of “Hellenized Bulgarians” along with others who exhibited Bulgarian consciousness (mentioned above). Along the same lines, unconvincing efforts are made, usually by patriotic local historians, to attach them to the Bulgarian National Revival as “teachers.” It was only recently that a Bulgarian author empathetically placed Athanas Bogoridi within his contemporary context. As pointed out by

⁸⁶ About Anton Kiryakov Tsankov, see Danova, *Ivan Dobrovski*, 168–170.

⁸⁷ Afrodita Aleksieva, “Atanas Bogoridi i spisanie ‘Ermis o logios,’” *Literaturna misāl* 18, no. 6 (1974): 91–96. See especially Yordan Zhelev, “Le Dr. Athanas Bogoridi. Les origines, l’activité, l’époque,” *Études balkaniques* 45, no. 4 (2009): 133–179.

⁸⁸ Arnaudov, *Seliminski*, 255, 268–269.

Yordan Zhelev, given the patriarchal and educationally backward Bulgarian milieu of the early nineteenth century, a well-educated and gifted person could only apply his abilities and find intellectual self-realization in the centers of the Ottoman Empire and of the Danubian principalities or further abroad (in Austria, France or Russia) and thus in a wider international cosmopolitan milieu. The Hellenic linguistic and intellectual universe, with its modern Enlightenment ideas and aspirations for liberation, presented a particularly hospitable and natural milieu for people from the Ottoman Empire, and it then had a wider all-Balkan, not nationally Greek, dimension.⁸⁹

Finally, there were cases of “Bulgarians” who not only worked in the Greek cultural sphere but identified with the Greek national idea. One such individual was Margarit Dimzov (Margaritis Dimitsas, though he might have been Vlach) from Ohrid, a historian, philologist and geographer and a professor at the University of Athens. He was the author of *Political Geography* (1882) and the monumental *Macedonia in Speaking Stones and Surviving Monuments* (1896), in which he presented testimonies of Greekness in Macedonia (Greek inscriptions, ancient ruins) to prove the Hellenic origins of the Macedonians.⁹⁰ Other prominent cases are Mihail Bodle (Michail Potlis) from Ohrid,⁹¹ who studied in Athens and became professor at the University of Athens and served as minister of foreign affairs and justice in 1855–1856, and Atanas Belkov (Athanasios Levkias), from a village near Plovdiv, who became a professor of the history of medicine at the University of Athens and an ardent advocate of the Megali idea.⁹² While they are excluded from national Bulgarian history as apostates, they are legitimate figures of Greek national history.

Or take the interesting case of Aleksandăr Kurtovich (1842–1917), known as Zoiros pasha, born in Beirut from a Bulgarian father (from the

⁸⁹ Zhelev, “Le Dr. Athanase Bogoridi.”

⁹⁰ Kuzman Shapkarev reproachfully mentions Dimitsas and Nikola Savin (again from Ohrid) as examples of entirely Hellenized Bulgarians who believed that the Macedonians were authentic Greeks. See Shapkarev, *Za vāzrazhdeneto*, 46, 394. About Dimitsas as part of the Greek intellectual scene, see Evangelos Kofos, “National Heritage and National Identity in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Macedonia,” in *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality*, eds. Martin Blinkhorn and Thanos Veremis (Athens: Sage-Eliaep, 1990), 103–141, esp. 107.

⁹¹ Mentioned by Kuzman Shapkarev in a letter to Georgi Rakovski. See Traykov, *Rakovski i balkanskite*, 358.

⁹² See Romyana Radkova, *Posmārtni materialī za bălgarski vāzrozhdenski deytsi*, vol. 1 (Sofia, Akademichno izdatelstvo “Marin Drinov,” 2003), 93–94; Danova, *Natsionalniyat vāpros*, 146.

influential and patriotic Chalăkov family of Plovdiv) and a Syrian mother, who soon divorced. He studied at the Greek school on the island of Syros, then studied philosophy and medicine in Pisa and graduated from the military medical school in Constantinople. He then practiced medicine in Constantinople and became a pasha, a prominent position in Ottoman society. He promoted public hygiene, organized the first anti-rabies institute in Turkey (modeled after that of Louis Pasteur in Paris) and represented Turkey in various international medical congresses. Yet he concealed his Bulgarian descent, and his literary writings reveal him as an admirer of classical Greece and of the Byzantine Empire.⁹³ Biographies like that make sense only in the Ottoman imperial context and hardly fit any national(ist) history.

Cases of the opposite, when Greeks identified with the Bulgarians and worked for Bulgarian education in both Greek and Bulgarian, are quite rare. One such case might possibly have been the veteran teacher and “enlightener” Emanuil Vaskidovich (from the mostly Greek town of Melnik), whose Bulgarian consciousness and contribution to the Church struggles are well-established, though some authors consider him of Bulgarian origin.⁹⁴ That Greeks (such as Greek teachers in the Greek schools in the Bulgarian lands) did not identify with the Bulgarians to the point of assuming Bulgarian consciousness can be explained by the Greeks’ earlier national revival and a developed national consciousness that set them apart. There were more Serbs working in Bulgarian schools and identifying with the Bulgarians: the best-known is Konstantin Ognyanovich, but there were also Panayot in Kyustendil and Georgi Miletich in Veles and Štip. When mentioning them and their times, Ivan Shishmanov rightly concludes: “So fluid were the ideas of nationality even up to 1840.”⁹⁵

⁹³ Stoyanov, “Bălgari, rabotili,” 457–458.

⁹⁴ The first to treat him as Greek (and slander him) seems to have been Ivan Seliminski. He is considered Greek by Penev, *Istoriya na novata*, vol. 3, 563, and others. This is contested by Arnaudov, *Seliminski*, 293; Angel Dimitrov, *Uchilishteto, progresăt i natsionalnata revolyutsiya. Bălgarskoto uchilishte prez Văzrazhdaneto* (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na BAN, 1987), 64. His Bulgarian consciousness and patriotism (though without proof of descent) is substantiated by Trendafil Krăstănov, “Emanuil Vaskidovich (1795–1875),” *Izvestiya na BID*, vol. 30 (Sofia, 1977), 71–97.

⁹⁵ Shishmanov, “Konstantin G. Fotinov,” 641. Examples of this “fluidity,” or rather, parallel identities are Hristofor Žefarović (author of *Stematografiya*, 1741) and Jovan Rajić (*Istoriya raznih slovenskih narodov, najpače Bolgar, Horvatov i Serbov*, 1794–1795), who regarded and designated themselves as both Serbs and Bulgarians. See Penev, *Nachalo na bălgarskoto*, 33–36. Another example is Parteniy Pavlovich from Silistra (ca. 1695–1760), who was ordained and made a career at the (Serbian) Patriarchate of Peć and lived in

In the national and still quite nationalist Bulgarian historiography, the rejection of Greek influence is still a decisive criterion for evaluating—and ranking—the figures of the era. There is hardly any understanding for nationally indifferent or ambivalent personalities or for parallel (simultaneous) identities and least of all for embracing an “alien” identity. The indeterminacy of, or simply indifference toward, national identities among broad strata until late in the Ottoman era, the cultural osmosis among commercial and intellectual elites, the contingencies of a certain biographical trajectory and the various interactions between ethnic groups resulting in parallel identities and shifts from one to another are hardly understood and even less appreciated. Later national criteria are projected backwards in an act of “modernization” (or, in fact, nationalization) of historical realities. The national historiographies search through their nationalist lenses for national “awakeners” and activists, ignoring the rest as irrelevant or even anomalous. In fact, even terms such as “ambivalence” or “osmosis” are the product of already accomplished national differentiation, placing us on the same epistemological terrain with only limited capacity for transcending the conventional paradigm and “relativization.” Yet this might be changing, to judge from some recent Bulgarian publications (cited above), which take an interest in “unusual” and “extraordinary” figures who lived and moved between different worlds and contexts, without regard to their patriotism or lack thereof.

Toward Modern Bulgarian Education

To create (“revive”) a nation out of the Bulgarian ethnic community, modern education in Bulgarian was necessary. This venture had to start from a very low point: elementary literacy of a limited number of people in Church Slavonic derived from liturgical books (Psalter and Diurnal) in “cell” (*kiliyni*) schools run by monasteries and churches with monks and priests as teachers. Modern Bulgarian secular schools were not available, and there were no textbooks or other teaching materials in the vernacular. Moreover, Bulgarian was not a standardized literary language with books and periodicals but consisted of a variety of dialects. Finally, the Cyrillic

Karlowitz (Sremski Karlovci) in the Habsburg Empire; in his autobiography he advocated South Slavic unity.

alphabet was largely replaced by Greek letters, so that one wrote in Slavic (Bulgarian) dialects with Greek letters.⁹⁶

Therefore, after experiencing the need for modern knowledge in their practical affairs, the Bulgarians first turned to the modernized and secular Greek schools.⁹⁷ Some attended the famous higher Greek schools (such as gymnasiums and lyceums) in various parts of the Ottoman Empire and outside it. Most important for the Bulgarians were the Great School in Kuruçeşme in Constantinople supported by the Patriarchate (attended by forty-four Bulgarians), the St. Sava Princely Academy in Bucharest (thirty-five Bulgarians until it was closed down in 1821), the gymnasium in Athens and the University of Athens, established in 1837 (thirty in both), the theological school on the island of Chalki (twenty-three) and the commercial school there (twenty-one), the academy in Iași (seven), Kydonies-Aivali (six), Kairis's school on the island of Andros in 1836–1839 (eight) and the schools in Smyrna, Mount Athos, Chios, Patmos and Ioannina. In all 160 Bulgarians studied in the Greek high schools and at the University of Athens from the end of the eighteenth century until the founding of the Bulgarian state in 1878. Among the well-known Greek teachers—often with higher education in philosophy, natural sciences, mathematics or medicine, obtained in Italy, France or Germany—were Eugenios Voulgaris, Nikiphoros Theotokis, Georgios Gennadios, Konstantinos Asopios, Neophytos Vamvas, Dimitrios Darvaris, Konstantinos Oikonomos, Neophytos Doukas, Konstantinos Vardalachos, Konstantinos Koumas, Nikolaos Logadis, Theoklitos Pharmakidis, Dionysios Pyrros and Lambros Photiadis.

The Bulgarians also attended the (lower) Greek schools in the Bulgarian lands and contributed to their support. There were such schools in towns with Greek or Hellenized communities, such as Melnik, Plovdiv (Philippoupolis), Sozopol (Apollonia) and Pomorie (Anchialos), but also in economically developed Bulgarian towns such as Tărnovo, Svishtov, Karlovo, Sliven and Kotel. There were Greek schools in Macedonia as

⁹⁶ Some testimonies: Seliminski, "Istoricheski spomen," 305–306; Viktor Grigorievich, *Ocherk puteshestviya po Evropeyskoy Turtsii* (Moscow, 1877; reprint: Sofia, 1978), 102 (in 1843 the author did not find anyone in Ohrid who knew Cyrillic); Rakovski, *Săchineniya*, vol. 1, 346 (from his *Gorski pătńik*, published in 1857); Părlchev, "Avtobiografiya," 239 (in 1861 only three men in Ohrid knew the Bulgarian alphabet and called it Serbian); Shapkarev, *Za vāzrazhdaneto*, 40–44. See also Arnaudov, *Bratya Miladinovi*, 256–259.

⁹⁷ About Greek education: Shishmanov, Uvod, 52–53, 58. More detail is presented in Afrodita Aleksieva, "Grătskata prosveta i formiraneto na bălgarskata vāzrozhdenska inteligentsiya," in *Problemi na balkanskata istoriya i kultura. Studia balcanica 14* (Sofia: Institut za balkanistika, Izdatelstvo na BAN, 1979), 156–180.

well—in Ohrid, Kukush, Struga and Bitola. The teachers in these schools were either Greeks (especially in the towns with Greek communities) or Bulgarian “Hellenists” who had obtained their education in such schools. Such Bulgarian teachers included Rayno Popovich, Ivan Seliminski (for a time), Andon Hadzhi Krinchev, daskal (teacher) Marincho, Rayno Stoyanovich, Dimităr Miladinov, Grigor Pärlichev, Rayko Zhinzifov (for some years) and Ioan Evrov. It was from the Bulgarian “Hellenists” that the impulse for reforming the Bulgarian education came, namely the introduction of secular material and the use of the native language in teaching. Some Bulgarian “Hellenists” first used Bulgarian in the Greek schools in order to explain the Greek language and facilitate comprehension of the Greek texts. This was done first in the “Greek” school of Andon Hadzhi Krinchev (daskal Andon) in Kotel in 1812, followed by daskal Nikolaki in Sliven in 1819.⁹⁸ The teachers Dimităr Miladinov, Rayno Popovich and others also used Bulgarian alongside Greek.⁹⁹ Most of the Bulgarians who subsequently attended the famous higher Greek schools in Bucharest, Iași, Kydonies, Andros, Kuruçeşme, Chalki, Athens, Ioannina and elsewhere came from these primary Greek schools. Some would-be national activists (most notably Neofit Rilski, Petko Slaveykov and Kuzman Shapkarev) attended these schools but did not continue in higher Greek schools.

Somewhat later the Greek-Hellenic schools came into being with Bulgarian as the second language of instruction, then Helleno-Bulgarian or Helleno-Slavic schools, where the study of Bulgarian (at the primary level) preceded the study of Greek (on the next level) until finally there were entirely Bulgarian modern schools. These were all secular schools, and sometimes a school of one type was transformed into another type. The earliest Helleno-Bulgarian school was founded in Svishtov (on the Danube) in 1815 by Emanuil Vaskidovich. Similar schools were founded in the 1820s and 1830s by Rayno Popovich, Neofit Bozveli, Konstantin Fotinov,

⁹⁸ Dimitrov, *Uchilishteto*, 34–35. On the role of the Greek schools in particular, see Stojan Maslev, “Die Rolle der griechischen Schulen und der griechischen Literatur für die Aufklärung des bulgarischen Volkes zur Zeit der Wiedergeburt,” in *Über Beziehungen des Griechentums zum Ausland in der neueren Zeit* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1968), 339–395, esp. 339–354, 366–371. Maslev comes to the conclusion that in general the purely Greek (lower) schools in the Bulgarian lands tended to teach and shape the children in a patriotic Greek spirit. The later “Hellenic” or Greek-Bulgarian schools were more Bulgarian in spirit. It seems, however, that a great deal depended on the teachers (not just the type of school), especially on the Bulgarian “Hellenists,” and on the milieu of the school (in a purely Greek or a mostly Bulgarian community, in Macedonia, etc.).

⁹⁹ Balabanov, *Gavril Krăstovich*, 45; Shapkarev, *Za vāzrazhdaneto*, 391, 484–485; Arnau-dov, *Bratya Miladinovi*, 46–47.

Hristaki Pavlovich, Neofit Rilski, Konstantin Ognyanovich, Ivan Seliminski, Sava Dobroplodni and others. Greek was used there only for teaching more advanced knowledge that was contained only in Greek textbooks and books when teaching materials in Bulgarian were still lacking. The teachers in these schools, especially veterans such as Rayno Popovich, Emanuil Vaskidovich, Neofit Rilski, Dimităr Miladinov and others, prepared the first generation of Bulgarian intelligentsia and a number of prominent Bulgarian patriots and national activists.

Because of the anti-Greek prejudice of Bulgarian historiography, the Helleno-Bulgarian schools are usually presented as a kind of transitory (and inferior) form of the new-Bulgarian schools and education, namely as a transition to Bell-Lancaster mutual (*vzaimouchitelni*) schools on the model of the school in Gabrovo founded in 1835. But as historian Angel Dimitrov has pointed out, the Bulgarian mutual schools were elementary, while the Helleno-Bulgarian schools included a higher level and thus resembled the later Bulgarian “class” (*klasni*) schools—they extended a year or more after the elementary education and had a richer curriculum. This was so because the “Hellenist” teachers were, as a rule, better educated and taught some special subjects above the primary level, though the higher level was not formally separated. Moreover, the Bell-Lancaster mutual teaching method (in which more advanced students teach the beginners) was pioneered by Emanuil Vaskidovich in his Helleno-Bulgarian school in Svishtov in the late 1820s, although it was popularized by the school in Gabrovo founded in 1835 (by another graduate of the Greek schools, Neofit Rilski, who became familiar with this method at the Princely Academy in Bucharest). The school of Vaskidovich and the school of Hristaki Pavlovich (also in Svishtov) became the first modern Bulgarian schools in the early 1830s, though the school of Gabrovo became the best-known because of the organizational talent of its founder, Vasil Aprilov, and the reputation of its first teacher, Neofit Rilski. On the other hand, the activities of the teachers in Svishtov were limited to their own area, while the Gabrovo school became a model school, a center for education of modern teachers, and fulfilled an ambitious nationwide program of new-Bulgarian education.¹⁰⁰

Thus most of the first generation of the modern Bulgarian intelligentsia passed through the Greek and the Helleno-Greek schools. These were

¹⁰⁰ Dimitrov, *Uchilishteto*, 32–41, 63–76. On the Greek influence over the Bulgarian schools, see also Penev, *Istoriya na novata*, vol. 3, 224–245.

the most accessible places where they could receive secular knowledge and preparation for further studies. Many then continued their education in the higher Greek schools in the Ottoman Empire, the Danubian Principalities, in the independent Greek kingdom, in Russia or elsewhere (although not so many went to Western universities in this era).¹⁰¹ It is hard to overstate the contribution that Greek education made to the Bulgarian intelligentsia precisely from the first generation of nation-builders. That contribution should not be eclipsed by the fact that some of these intellectuals subsequently turned against Greek influence (including education), in which they saw the threat of assimilation. That the Bulgarian national formation was closely knit and entangled with the Greeks through education is clear enough.

Greek influence on modern Bulgarian education extended to other aspects as well. In compiling the first Bulgarian secular primer (the famous “fish primer” of 1824), Dr. Petăr Beron used foreign models, mainly the *eklogar* (primer) of D. Darvaris.¹⁰² *Slavenobolgarskoe detevodstvo* (Slav-Bulgarian Pedagogy), consisting of six secular textbooks in Bulgarian (vernacular) and published by Emanuil Vaskidovich and Neofit Bozveli in 1835, was also based on various Greek textbooks. As mentioned, the Bulgarians adopted the Bell-Lancaster (mutual) teaching method of Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster through Greek mediation. In Greece itself it was first introduced in 1819 by Athanasios Politis in the school on the island of Corfu and by Georgios Kleovoulos in the Greek schools in Iași and Bucharest in 1820.¹⁰³ In their generous sponsorship of education and literature, the Greeks provided the Bulgarians with inspiring examples, including the Zossimas from Ioannina, Konstantinos Barbakis and Zosimos Anastasios. In their lavish gestures and total dedication to their cause—to the point of remaining bachelors—these figures were imitated by Vasil Aprilov, Konstantin Fotinov, Georgi Rakovski, Nayden Yovanovich (a book trader from Tatar Pazardzhik) and others. The Greek example of zeal for knowledge and support of the schools and education was cited by Bulgarian national activists with envy, but also to spurn their compatriots.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ A list of Greek-educated Bulgarians appears in Dimitrov, *Uchilishteto*, 33–34.

¹⁰² Dimitrov, *Uchilishteto*, 60–62.

¹⁰³ Dimitrov, *Uchilishteto*, 65–66; Danova, *Konstantin Georgiev Fotinov*, 113; Chassiotis, *L'instruction*, 22–24.

¹⁰⁴ For example, Petko Slaveykov, “Silistra,” *Gayda*, March 1, 1865 (reprinted in Slaveykov, *Săchimeniya*, vol. 5, 280–283, esp. 282).

After its Greek and Helleno-Bulgarian beginnings, modern Bulgarian education evolved rapidly toward primary new-Bulgarian schools entirely in Bulgarian, the so-called “mutual” schools. Later on there emerged the so-called “class” schools with one or more grades above elementary school, with a richer curriculum and some specialized subjects. After shedding Greek influence, Bulgarian education pursued another cultural orientation, namely toward Russia. This started with the founding of the Gabrovo school in 1835, due to the efforts and financial contribution of the Odessa-based Bulgarian trader Vasil Aprilov (and his friend the trader Nikolay Palauzov) and of the Bulgarian commercial colonies in Odessa and Bucharest as well as sponsors from Gabrovo. Aprilov himself was a Greek-school graduate, Hellenophile and sponsor of Greek education in Odessa (he wrote better in Greek than in Bulgarian) before becoming an ardent Bulgarian patriot. Until his death in 1847, he was the key figure in reorienting Bulgarian education and culture toward Russia and away from the Greeks. This occurred mostly through the soliciting of stipends for Bulgarian students to study in Russian universities, theological seminaries and academies, starting with four such stipends in 1840. More such stipends were offered after the Crimean War (1853–1856), when Russian foreign policy more actively sought to influence the Bulgarians.¹⁰⁵ Upon their return to Bulgaria, Russian-school graduates who served as teachers (and thus as teachers of future teachers) quickly reoriented education toward Russia from the late 1840s onwards. It was Russian-school graduates (first Nayden Gerov and Botyo Petkov) who popularized the higher “class” schools. Textbooks and other materials were also translated and adapted from Russian.¹⁰⁶ This went hand-in-hand with an overall reorientation toward Russian literature, ideas and culture. The Greek and Helleno-Bulgarian schools lost students, who turned to the new-Bulgarian schools with Russian-school graduates as teachers.

¹⁰⁵ Penev, *Istoriya na novata*, vol. 3, 242; Nikolay Genchev, *Bălgarsko vāzrazhdane* (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na OF, 1988), 163–165; Nikolay Genchev, *Bălgaro-ruski kulturni obshtuvaniya prez Vāzrazhdaneto* (Sofia: LIK, 2002), 71–81, 198–204. The author cites aggregate data for the Bulgarian Revival (that is, until 1878): 699 Bulgarians, or 39 percent of the Bulgarian intelligentsia that studied abroad, studied in Russian high schools (gymnasiums); 220 Bulgarians, or one-third of the Bulgarian intelligentsia with higher education, graduated from Russian universities (198, 200). Bulgarian-Russian cultural ties and exchanges were promoted by the Bulgarian Board of Trustees in Odessa (*Bălgarsko Odesko nastoyatelstvo*) and the Slavophile committees in Moscow and St. Petersburg. About the change of Russian policies, see Danova, *Ivan Dobrovski*, 478–481; Genchev, *Bălgaro-ruski*, 42–50, 65–68.

¹⁰⁶ Dimitrov, *Uchilishteto*, 84–87.

Finally, the emergence of the modern Bulgarian printing press was strongly influenced by Greek examples. The first new-Bulgarian printed book—*Nedelnik* (Sunday Book) by Sofroniy Vrachanski—was actually a translation and elaboration of Nikiphoros Theotokis's *Kyriakodromion*. It contained Sunday orations and sermons and was printed in the vernacular. The first Bulgarian journal, *Lyuboslovie* (Philology)—published in Smyrna (1842 [one issue], 1844–1846) by Konstantin Fotinov—had Greek prototypes (*Apothiki ton ofelimon gnoseon* [Store: Magazine for Useful Knowledge] and *Philology*). Ivan Dobrovski's journal *Mirozrenie* (View on the World), published in Austria in 1850–1851, was modeled on the famous Greek Enlightenment journal *Ermis o logios* (also called *Logios Ermis*, 1811–1814, 1816–1821).¹⁰⁷

The Bulgarian language controversy over what should be used as the basis of the literary (standardized) Bulgarian language also resembled and was inspired by the Greek language debates, with their factions, ideas and arguments. The Greek “conservatives” (Eugenios Voulgaris, Konstantinos Oikonomos and Neophytos Doukas) were in favor of ancient Greek. The advocates of moderate reform (Adamantios Korais) were for some mix between ancient Greek and the vernacular(s)—a kind of archaizing modern Greek (Katharevousa). The “radicals” (the philologist and poet Athanasios Christopoulos) championed a variant of the vernacular. Their Bulgarian counterparts in the “conservative” camp (Georgi Rakovski, Hristaki Pavlovich, Konstantin Fotinov, Neofit Bozveli) advocated the use of archaic “Old Bulgarian” (Church Slavonic) forms and syntax. The “middle” party (Neofit Rilski, Gavril Krăstevich, Ivan Bogorov, Ilarion Makariopolski) supported some compromise between Church Slavonic and the vernacular. Meanwhile, the “radicals” (Petăr Beron, Vasil Aprilov, Nayden Gerov, Ivan Dobrovski, Dobri Chintulov) were for a literary language based entirely on the vernacular and a phonetic orthography.¹⁰⁸ However, the Bulgarian language issue proved less intractable than that of Greek, because “Old Bulgarian” as Church Slavonic (actually a Russian redaction) was called, did not enjoy the prestige of Ancient Greek, and its use was not connected with the ideology of the Bulgarian National Revival. (By contrast, Ancient Greek was glorified by the Greek Enlightenment and closely connected with modern Greek scholarship, which sought to use it

¹⁰⁷ Shishmanov, *Ivan Dobrovski*, 321.

¹⁰⁸ Penev, *Istoriya na novata*, vol. 3, 117–130; Mihail Arnaudov, *Neofit Hilendarski Bozveli. Zhivot, delo, epoha, 1785–1848* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1971, 2nd revised edition), 224–229.

directly or by archaizing modern Greek.) In fact, the Bulgarian language issue was settled in favor of the vernacular (the Eastern dialects), not by philologists but by talented writers, poets and journalists, including Petko Slaveykov. In particular, Ivan Andreov (Bogorov)'s *Pǎrvichka bălgarska gramatika* (First Bulgarian Grammar) took a decisive new-Bulgarian (pro-vernacular) course.

Greek influence also left traces on emerging modern Bulgarian literature. The translations from Greek were followed by imitations of Greek models (such as transfers of themes, images—like the celebrated “Mother Bulgaria”—and metaphors) and attempts to create authentic national literature. The literary works of Sofroniy Vrachanski, of the early writers from western Bulgaria, of Rayno Popovich, Neofit Rilski, Hristaki Pavlovich and others were based upon Greek pedagogical literature. Petko Slaveykov was influenced by Greek urban poetry, especially the erotic poetry of Athanasios Christopoulos and Greek popular love songs. Greek satire against the moral corruption of the Phanariots had a noteworthy influence upon Neofit Bozveli, and Greek patriotic songs had an influence upon Dobri Chintulov.¹⁰⁹ A reluctant recognition of Greek influence on the emerging Bulgarian literature is suggested in the words of Petko Slaveykov, the most popular man of letters of the Revival era: “Our literature (*knizhnina*) should not be an underage child of the Greek, nor a scrawny follower of whatever other literature. . . .”¹¹⁰

Another example of Greek-Bulgarian “cultural osmosis” is Bulgarian publishers and distributors of Greek books, such as the brothers Mihail and Simeon Hristovi or Hristidi (from Stara Zagora), Dimităr Angeliev or Angelidi (in Plovdiv), Dimităr Panichkov (from Kalofer), Ivan Simionov (from Tărlis near Nevrokop) and Konstantin Dărzhilovich (from Dărzhilovo, near Voden).¹¹¹ Many educated Bulgarians possessed collections of Greek books and journals. The biggest such collection—belonging to Neofit Rilski—consisted of 251 titles.¹¹²

But beyond these specific examples of borrowing and adaptation, the Bulgarians received the ideas of the Enlightenment (and, to a lesser extent,

¹⁰⁹ Penev, *Istoriya na novata*, vol. 3, 104–116.

¹¹⁰ Slaveykov, “Vsintsa nashi,” 384.

¹¹¹ Manyu Stoyanov, “Bălgari—izdateli i razprostraniteli na grătski knigi,” in *Văzrozhdenski knizhari*, ed. Petăr Parizhkov (Sofia, 1980), 296–303.

¹¹² Aphrodita Alexieva, “Collections personnelles des livres grecs dans les terres bulgares pendant le Réveil national,” in *Relations et influences réciproques entre Grecs et Bulgares XVIII^e–XX^e siècle* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1991), 13–30.

of Romanticism)¹¹³ mediated by Greek scholars and authors. Most generally, these ranged from ideas on the literary language and the character of education, through pedagogical ideals and social norms, to ideas of reform of the Church and notions about government; the stand on them marks a given person as “radical,” “moderate” or “conservative.” The Greek mediation of Enlightenment ideas is treated in general terms by the literary historians Ivan Shishmanov and Boyan Penev,¹¹⁴ but the particulars of the transfers and adaptations are elaborated in the painstaking studies of Nadya Danova.¹¹⁵ Characteristically, the Enlightenment does not feature as an era in the Bulgarian national narrative, which speaks of (national) “Revival.” I will not go here into the controversy about the existence or nature of a Bulgarian Enlightenment.¹¹⁶ But perhaps, apart from the paucity, diffuseness and belatedness of its manifestation, another reason that the Enlightenment is not singled out as an era is precisely the Greek mediation and the fact that the most prominent Bulgarian enlighteners worked in the cosmopolitan milieu of Hellenism rather than in the national milieu. Later on, the sources of intellectual influences diversified, and direct cultural ties with Western Europe, Russia and the other Slavic cultural centers were established. But initially it was the Greeks that opened the window to the West and to modernity for the Bulgarians.

Toward National Separation: The Church Controversy

As is well-known, communities in the Ottoman Empire were differentiated not by ethnicity but by religious confession. The recognition of the Bulgarians as a separate community thus required Church autonomy—

¹¹³ The influence of Romanticism was most often mediated by the Western Slavs and the Russians. See Penev, *Istoriya na novata*, vol. 3, 161–170; Boris Yotsov, “Slavyanskite literaturi i slavyanskoto saznanie v Bălgariya,” *Bălgarski pregled* 1, no. 1 (1929): 39–79. Yotsov contrasts the Romanticism mediated by the Slavs to the earlier Greek and Serbian (Enlightenment) rationalism.

¹¹⁴ Shishmanov, “Uvod,” 31–73, esp. 49–57; Penev, *Istoriya na novata*, vol. 3, 80–98.

¹¹⁵ Nadya Danova, “Kăm văprosa za rolyata na grătskoto Prosveshtenie v protsesa na formiraneto na bălgarskata vâzrozhdenska ideologiya: Adamantios Korais i bălgarite,” in *Studia balcanica*, 18, *Iz kulturnoto razvitie na balkanskite narodi, XV–XX vek* (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na BAN, 1985), 41–71; Nadya Danova, “Neofit Bozveli i grătskoto prosveshtenie,” in *Neofit Bozveli i bălgarskata literatura*, eds. G. Dimov and S. Tarinska (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na BAN, 1993), 24–39; Danova, “Marko D. Balabanov”; Danova, *Konstantin Georgiev Fotinov*, esp. 162–431; Danova, *Ivan Dobrovski*, 98–99, 121–132.

¹¹⁶ See Daskalov, *The Making of a Nation*, 32–39.

Bulgar-millet instead of the undifferentiated *Rum-millet* (Romaic or Romaeian community) that foreigners actually identified as Greek. This is why the nation-building efforts of the Bulgarians inevitably put them in conflict with the ecumenical Patriarchate, under whose jurisdiction they were placed together with the other Orthodox peoples. The ecumenical Patriarchate, in principle a nationally neutral religious institution, was increasingly experienced by Bulgarian national activists as Greek and Hellenizing. Its Byzantine origins, and the fact that most of the higher clergy was Greek (or Graecized) and that the Greek language naturally prevailed in the administration and in the liturgy (though not everywhere), were more than sufficient to put the nationally sensitive activists on guard. It is for that reason that (whatever their other grievances) the Bulgarians' demands included liturgy in the native language, Bulgarian clergy (priests and bishops) and finally, autonomy with a Bulgarian hierarchy. The conflict with the ecumenical Patriarchate was thus not dogmatic, but purely political; its objective was national disentanglement and separation from the Greeks (including territorial), and the struggle itself served as a means of national mobilization.¹¹⁷

It is not necessary here to go into the manifold relations between religion (and particular religions) and nationalism. Suffice it to say that the Bulgarian case does not fit into a situation in which religion became a matrix for nation-building and a marker of ethnic/national identity (as with Jews or Armenians). While religion demarcated the Bulgarians from the Muslims and thus contributed to the preservation of the Bulgarian people (as has been argued by Bulgarian historians), it did not distinguish the Bulgarians from the other Orthodox populations (such as Greeks, Serbs, Vlachs and Christian Albanians) within the confessional *Rum-millet* under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.¹¹⁸ National

¹¹⁷ The political nature of the Church conflict was clear at the time to its activists: Svetoslav Milarov and Petko Slaveykov, "Dvete kasti i vlasti," *Makedoniya*, July 25, 1872 (reprinted in *Vǎzrozhdenski strantitsi*, 186–197); Lyuben Karavelov, "S reshenieto na tsǎrkovniya vǎpros bǎlgarite pridobivat svoje narodno pravo i nraŕstvena samostoyatelnost," *Svoboda*, March 12, 1870 (reprinted in *Vǎzrozhdenski strantitsi*, 205–208).

¹¹⁸ On this point, see Carsten Riis, *Religion, Politics, and Historiography in Bulgaria* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2002 [distributed by Columbia University Press]), esp. 124, 134, 139. The author treats the role of Orthodoxy in the building of the Bulgarian nation and national identity, especially the question of whether Orthodoxy was a factor for ethnic (or national) preservation (the "continuity thesis") or there is a nationalist continuity-creating fiction. But he is mostly interested in the socialist interpretation of the role of the Orthodox Church (and not the previous scholarship), and because of that, he does not recognize that both may be true in some sense and for some eras.

formation and separation thus required an autonomous Church organization, notwithstanding the common religion. Furthermore, it was part of the Orthodox tradition that states had their own churches, though in the Bulgarian case it was not an actual state, but an aspiration toward a state, and that made recognition more difficult. Rather than a confession as such, it was a Church organization regarded as a matrix for a future state that became politicized toward national purposes.

Initially financial grievances—that is, the corrupt practices and financial abuses of the higher clergy—predominated.¹¹⁹ There existed the infamous system of selling ecclesiastical positions at all levels (including the Patriarch and the bishops), introduced by the Phanariots—rich and influential Greeks living in the Phanar district in Istanbul who established control over the Church of Constantinople. The Ottoman authorities received their share, and the price grew over time. Moreover, the office-holders were often changed arbitrarily in order to sell the position again. The newly appointed aspired not only to recoup their expenses (often loans) quickly, but also to make a profit. In addition, they brought with them relatives and associates, who had to be supported as well. As a result the flock, especially the helpless villagers, were charged numerous, and often arbitrary, taxes and dues, raised at will and collected with the help of the Ottoman authorities. That is why one of the Bulgarians' first demands concerning the Church question was to end these practices and introduce regular salaries for the clergy instead. It is worth noting that the Greek peasant population in its lands was similarly subject to the corrupt practices of the Patriarchate and also considered them theft. On top of the economic grievances (typically accompanied by moral critiques of the clergy for lewdness and depravity), Bulgarian activists added national ones, namely against Greek-language liturgy as incomprehensible to Bulgarians and against the displacement of the Church Slavonic liturgy and

¹¹⁹ The greediness of the Greek bishops and the financial exploitation of the Bulgarians is the main grievance in Neofit Bozveli's pamphlet *Plach mati Bolgarii* (Lament of Mother Bulgaria) in *Văzrozhdenski stranitsi*, 107–134. On top of that comes the grievance that the Greek clergy kept the Bulgarians ignorant and hampered their enlightenment. The fiery monk Neofit Bozveli was among the first activists of the Bulgarian Church movement, and the pamphlet was written in 1846 in the Hilendar monastery, where he was banished by the Patriarchate. Another critique of the practices of the Patriarchate appears in Seliminski, "Istoricheski spomen," 304–305, 310, 314–315, 317–321. On the system of selling of the ecclesiastical positions and financial spoliation, see also the historians: Dimităr Mishev, *Bălgariya v minaloto. Stranitsi iz bălgarskata kulturna istoriya* (Sofia, 1916), 202–205; Arnau-dov, *Neofit Hilendarski Bozveli*, 144–164; Markova, *Bălgarskoto tsărkovno*, 26–43.

books.¹²⁰ Hence the demands included officiating in Church Slavonic, but also the appointment in the Bulgarian lands of Bulgarian bishops, who would know the language of the population and be closer to it, as well as the participation of Bulgarian bishops in the administration of the Patriarchate. This reflects the aspiration toward national self-assertion through the use of the native tongue in the sermon and a Bulgarian clergy that would serve its ethnic community. It was only with the radicalization of the conflict later on that Church autonomy with its own hierarchy was demanded.

Bulgarian historiography on the Church question has misrepresented the issues (to various degrees, and with some exceptions) through nationalist lenses. Typically, the Patriarchate is held responsible for the deliberate “Hellenization” of the Bulgarians (and the other Orthodox populations) from quite early on and by various means. In the crudest (and long-outdated) version, the policies of Hellenization are dated with the abolition of the Archbishopric of Ohrid in 1767, or at the end of the eighteenth century or the beginning of the nineteenth century, by such means as preference for Greek clergy, the replacement of Church Slavonic with Greek, the destruction of Church Slavonic books and other monuments, and the closing down of Bulgarian schools.¹²¹ There are more moderate, though still incorrect, accounts. It is interesting to note that it was from a Greek source—historian Ioannis Philimon—that the Bulgarian national activists

¹²⁰ The first accusation against the Greek clergy was corruption and abuse, followed by lack of knowledge of Bulgarian. See Nikov, *Văzrazhdane*, 53, 63.

¹²¹ Especially Mishev, *Bălgariya v minaloto*, 187–195, 216–217, 219. According to this author there was an “auto-da-fé” of Bulgarian manuscripts, and since the end of the eighteenth century the national idea became a dogma of the Patriarchate. Similarly, see Vasil Zlatarski, *Nova politicheska i sotsialna istoriya na Bălgariya i Balkanskiya poluostror* (Sofia, 1921), esp. 142–159. The Hellenizing policies of the Patriarchate are dated here from the mid-eighteenth century (with the abolishment of the Archbishopric of Ohrid) and more strongly since the end of the eighteenth century. According to Petăr Nikov the deliberate Hellenizing activity of the Patriarchate started in the beginning of the nineteenth century with Patriarch Gregory V’s encyclicals in 1806 and 1819, though he admits that for some time it was not put into practice: Nikov, *Văzrazhdane*, 48–50, 67–68. See also Penev, *Istoriya na novata*, vol. 1, 199–200, 214. The author dates the Hellenizing policies of the Patriarchate to the beginning of the nineteenth century. For contemporary allegations of the burning of Bulgarian books, see the national revolutionary Rakovski, *Săchineniya*, 346–347, 349, 390. The legend that Metropolitan Ilarion of Tărnovo burned the library of the abolished Bulgarian Tărnovo Patriarchate was created by Petko Slaveykov. See Yurdan Trifonov, “Predanieto za izgorena starobălgarska biblioteka v Tărnovo,” *Spisanie na BAN* 14, no. 8 (1917): 1–41; Yurdan Trifonov, “Săchineniya na Petko Slaveykov s istoricheski karakter,” *Spisanie na BAN*, vol. 38 (Sofia, 1929), 81–123. Yurdan Trifonov proves him wrong.

(Georgi Rakovski, Gavril Krăstevich, Ivan Seliminski, Ivan Dobrovski) and then historians (Spiridon Palauzov, Marin Drinov) first borrowed the idea that the Patriarch of Constantinople abolished the Archbishopric of Ohrid in order to assimilate the Slavs in the empire and establish the domination of the Greeks from within.¹²² In fact, the founder of Greek national historiography, Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, criticized the Patriarchate for having missed the opportunity to Hellenize the non-Greek peoples in the Balkans.¹²³ Such ideas were developed by the Greek authors in their efforts to prove the continuity of Greek history, in this case by projecting the Megali idea backwards onto the past. However, they were put to a very different use by the Bulgarians who were intent on proving the early Hellenizing intentions of the Patriarchate—an “entangled” trajectory of an idea.

Such preconceived opinions were refuted (first by Ivan Shishmanov and Yordan Ivanov) through empirical research and gave way to more realistic accounts and assessments. It was rightly pointed out that, far from being motivated by modern national ideas, the Patriarch was head of the Orthodox community in the empire (not a national leader of the Hellenes) entrusted with its representation before the sultan and the defense of the faith against the Western (Catholic, Protestant) propaganda; and that some patriarchs and bishops were actually of Bulgarian descent.¹²⁴ The higher clergy, which sought to squeeze higher taxes out of the congregation, was driven by economic—not by national motives. Moreover, the very ignorance and illiteracy of most of the clergy (a result of the system of selling of positions) made it incapable of working systematically to promote Hellenism. Besides, there were cases in which Greek bishops learned Bulgarian and officiated in it, supported the translation of books into Bulgarian and opened up Bulgarian schools. As these fair-minded authors stress, Bulgarians and Greeks lived side-by-side on good terms, professing the same creed and suffering under the same plight. The conflict occurred much later—when the Bulgarians, following the

¹²² Danova, *Natsionalniyat vāpros*, 35; Danova, “Obrazāt na gārtsite,” 97–98.

¹²³ M.C. Paparrigopoulos, *Histoire de la civilisation hellénique* (Paris: Hachette, 1878), 408–409, 460–461. The Patriarch is treated here as the bearer of Hellenism, and his power is exercised in the interest of the Greek nation, while the Slavs have almost vanished from the scene of history. See also Danova, *Natsionalniyat vāpros*, 260.

¹²⁴ According to one author, thirteen out of ninety-seven ecumenical patriarchs from 1453 to 1872 were of Bulgarian origin. See Mihail Kolarov, “Bālgari—vselenski patriarsi,” *Izvestiya na Bālgarskata Patriarshiya* (1985), 179–191. But what “Bulgarian” meant in the pre-national era is another question.

Greek lead, headed down the path of their national emancipation and demanded Church autonomy in the 1840s.¹²⁵ The assertion that Church Slavonic literature and other parts of the Bulgarian heritage were systematically destroyed in the pre-national era was also shown to be unfounded; at most, one may say they were neglected.¹²⁶ It is another matter whether such sober voices prevailed in the deeply nationalist Bulgarian historiography of the communist era. It is interesting to note that as a mirror image of the previously mentioned accusations—that is, inverted but sharing the same nationalist optic—Orthodoxy and the Church were praised for preserving the separate ethnic communities (while they actually aimed at safeguarding the Christian community as such).

Thus the most accurate and fair-minded Bulgarian historiography upholds the view that the ecumenical Patriarchate began to change its attitude toward the Bulgarians in the 1840s and impose the Greek language in the liturgy and the schools (that is, those connected with churches) as well as suppressing ethnic cultural traditions and heritage, especially in Macedonia. This is explained by the establishment of the Greek state in 1830 and of an autonomous Greek Church in 1833 and the later rapprochement of the Patriarchate with the latter (formalized in the statutes of 1850). The Patriarchate was pushed on the new nationalizing course by the Greek state and its Church, but also by the challenge to its authority, first in the Danubian principalities since 1821 (where the Romanian Church gained autonomy with the reforms of Prince Alexander Cuza in 1865) and then by the Bulgarian demands. Before that the Patriarchate was indifferent or ambiguous toward the Bulgarians. Moreover, it hampered the development of Greek nationalism and later opposed the Greek

¹²⁵ Shishmanov, "Uvod," 50–51; Ivan Shishmanov, "Konstantin G. Fotinov," 642–647. The author dates the Hellenization policies of the Patriarchate after 1830, when according to him the nationalization of the Patriarchate occurred. See also Ivanov, *Bălgaro-grătski otnosheniya*, 2–5, 10–15. Here the conflict is said to date back to the Bulgarian demands for autonomous Church in the early 1840s. Also Maslev, "Die Rolle der griechischen Schulen," 354–366. Maslev cites a great deal of evidence about Greek bishops helping Bulgarian schools and the translation of books in Bulgarian as well as some contrary cases, thus revealing the absence of a common pattern and refuting the Hellenization thesis.

¹²⁶ Gandev, "Faktori na bălgarskoto," 77–89. On the basis of empirical evidence, the author rejects charges that Slavic manuscripts were systematically burned (even if individual cases occurred). He shows that the bishops had a certain ambiguity toward Slavic traditions but declares that, at most, they could be blamed for neglecting and not cultivating them. Also Ivan Shishmanov, "Novi dannii za istoriyata na nasheto vāzrazhdane," *Bălgarski pregled* 4, no. 11 (1898): 57–63.

struggle for independence.¹²⁷ Thus the eclipse of Bulgarian ethnic identity under the rule of the Patriarchate was not deliberate and planned, but a side effect of this Byzantine institution's natural preference for the Greek language and Greek or Graecized clergy. Hence the Church Slavonic tradition was neglected while the draining of the population of resources might have hampered education. Yet even such explanations somehow presuppose the "age of nationalism" and assess the activities of the Patriarchate—more precisely, its consequences for the would-be nations—from a later national point of view (which was alien to it). As one Greek author asserts, going a step further: not only did the Patriarchate see its flock as a community of believers without regard to ethnicity (*genos* without that word's later connotations of blood and ancestry), but even the Greek language of the Church functioned as a scriptural language and not as an ethnically marked and still less "national" language; and it was almost as incomprehensible to the Greek peasants (since it was not their vernacular) as to the Slav peasants.¹²⁸ On the other hand, the interest in consequences is not illegitimate, as long as it does not confuse unintended consequences with deliberate policies and is clear about where one's own interest originates.

Older Greek historiography (in the brief account of Andreas Lyberatos) supported the view, opposite to that prevailing in Bulgarian historiography, that the Patriarchy as an ecumenical institution did not try to Hellenize the Bulgarians. When the Bulgarian question arose, the Patriarchy tried to satisfy the Bulgarians' reasonable demands. However, the Bulgarians did not want to reach an agreement because (in Chrysostomos Papadopoulos's view) they tried to draw, through the autonomous Church, the boundaries of the future Greater Bulgaria in the Balkans. Papadopoulos also rebuffs the claim of Bulgarian historiography that the Greek clergy

¹²⁷ Markova, *Bălgarskoto tsárkovno*, 44–71; Danova, *Natsionalniyat vâpros*, 19, 58–59. As Danova pointed out, the encyclicals of Patriarch Gregory V in 1804 and 1819 not only were not directed toward Hellenization but even hampered the crystallization of Greek national consciousness. On the conflict of the Patriarchate with the Greek Enlightenment ideas, especially under Patriarch Gregory V (1797–1798, 1806–1808, 1818–1821), see Paschalis Kitromilides, "‘Imagined Communities’ and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans," in *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality*, eds. Martin Blinkhorn and Thanos Veremis (Athens: Eliamep, 1990), 23–66, esp. 52–53; Nadya Danova, "Razrivât mezhdû grâtskite vâzrozhdentsi i Tsarigradskata patriarshiya," *Izvestiya na BID*, vol. 27 (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na BAN, 1970), 35–62.

¹²⁸ Dimitris Livanios, "The Quest for Hellenism: Religion, Nationalism and Collective Identities in Greece (453–1913)," *The Historical Review/La revue historique*, vol. 3 (Athens: Institute of Neohellenic Research, 2006), 33–70, esp. 40–51.

was to blame for the decline of Bulgarian intellectual life, language and literature, because this was not what it was supposed to do (here the Bulgarian historian Stojan Maslev agrees).¹²⁹ The newer Greek interpretations, as exemplified by Paschalis Kitromilides, categorically reject the influence of nationalism on the policies of the Patriarchy and describe it as a traditional institution whose ideology and organization excluded the influence of nationalism on its policies.¹³⁰ Based on his research on the Bulgarian Church question, Andreas Lyberatos offers another interpretation: the Patriarchate was hardly a stable, monolithic institution with consistent policies (for instance, on Hellenization), except in its stand against modern Western European and national ideas (until the mid-nineteenth century). On the Bulgarian Church question in particular: in spite of the official rhetoric and the formal adherence to Church norms against “phyletism,” the Patriarchate’s hierarchy, in dealing with the Bulgarian activists, did not remain immune from the nationalist tendencies of the times, just like many nationally inspired Bulgarian hierarchs acting in favor of Church autonomy. In its negotiations with the Bulgarian representatives, it also gave in to Greek criticism and pressure.¹³¹

When precisely the Patriarchate embarked on a nationalist course remains a contested issue. According to Paschalis Kitromilides, it stood aloof while the local Churches of the Balkan peoples became “nationalized” (and for that reason it condemned the “phyletism” (ethnic fallacy) of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1872). Kitromilides admits, however, that the Patriarchate did not remain immune from nationalism and united with the Greek Church in common cause against the Exarchate in Macedonia and that, since the mid-nineteenth century, the Greek bishops in Macedonia became increasingly nationalist in order to counter Bulgarian national claims. A militant new generation of nationalist bishops emerged at the turn of the century (including Germanos Karavangelis as metropolitan of Kastoria in 1900, and Chrysostomos Kalafatis, bishop of Drama), acting in defiance of Patriarch Joachim III (1878–1884, 1901–1912), who supported the ecumenical tradition.¹³² Nadya Danova dates the turn of the Patriarchate to pro-Greek Hellenizing policies somewhat earlier, in the 1840s (parallel with the rise of Bulgarian national aspirations), though she admits

¹²⁹ Maslev, *Die Rolle der griechischen*,” 358–360.

¹³⁰ Kitromilides, “Imagined Communities,” 23–66.

¹³¹ Andreas Lyberatos, “Vselenskata patriarshiya, natsionalizmăt i bălgarskiyat tsărkoven văpros (1856–1872),” in *Religiya i tsărkva v Bălgariya* (Sofia: Gutenberg, 1999), 130–134.

¹³² Kitromilides, “Imagined Communities,” 23–66, esp. 55–59.

that it was gradual and hesitant and yielded results only around 1850. She also points to the fact that the two projects of the Greek Patriarchs Gregory VI and Joachim II drew boundaries for the Bulgarian Exarchate that coincided with numerous projects for Greater Greece (in the plan of Patriarch Gregory VI, the Bulgarians were confined between the Danube and the Balkan range).¹³³ In fact, it is not so much the dating of the turn of the Patriarchate against the Bulgarians (around 1850) that differs, but the interpretation: Kitromilides takes the “canonical” view, emphasizing Bulgarian “phyletism” and the breach of Orthodox unity (while being lenient to the autonomous Greek Church), and Danova stresses political considerations and pragmatism on both sides. Thus, while there seems to be agreement that the Great Church turned toward nationalism, there is disagreement over questions such as: “Who started first?” (implicitly: “Who was to blame?”) and “Which demands were justified?” To me these are of secondary importance once we acknowledge the growing potency of the nationalist tendency and the mutual conditioning, intertwining and rivalry between the two nationalisms.

There is a certain irony in the fact that Bulgarian nationalist attacks would focus on the still rather traditional ecumenical Patriarchate (both at the time and in the later historiography), rather than on modern (“progressive”) Greek nationalism, which presented a much graver danger to Bulgarians. This happened because the Bulgarian nation’s development had to pass through secession from the Patriarchate and because of its later role in promoting Greek national interests in the irredenta. While the Orthodox religion and the Church may have played a role in preserving Bulgarians’ ethnic identity (as some historians claim), the modern Bulgarian national “self” had to be affirmed in opposition to its religious identity (which did not set Bulgarians apart) and the Patriarchate. The common Orthodox proto-nation was destroyed by modern ethno-linguistic nationalisms.

The Bulgarian-Greek Church controversy offers examples of a number of “transfers” and “crossovers” of ideas that rebounded to the Greek side. To begin with, the Bulgarian activists borrowed ideas and arguments against the ecumenical Patriarchate and the Phanariots from their Greek Enlightenment opponents. Neofit Bozveli himself was influenced

¹³³ Danova, *Natsionalniyat vāpros*, 135–138; Nikov, *Vāzrazhdane*, 182–183. As Nikov points out, in Patriarch Anthimos VI’s plan parts of today’s southern Bulgaria and northern Macedonia were left under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate.

by Greek sources (and Serb sources modeled on earlier Greek examples) in his anti-Phanariot, anti-clerical pamphlet of 1846, *Mati Bolgariya*.¹³⁴ Theoklitos Pharmakidis's work *O synodikos tomos*, with its sharp critique of the Patriarchate, became a strong tool in Bulgarian hands (part of it was translated), and Pharmakidis's books on the Church question are preserved in libraries of Bulgarian intellectuals.¹³⁵ Pharmakidis's debate with Konstantinos Oikonomos was attentively followed by Bulgarian national activists; the enlightened ideas of Neophytos Vamvas added fuel.¹³⁶ The Greek Enlightenment critique of the Patriarchate was thus taken over by its Bulgarian opponents and adapted to national Bulgarian objectives. Most importantly, the Bulgarians had in front of them the example of the Greek Church in the Greek kingdom, which split from the Patriarchate in 1833 and eventually received autonomy in 1850. The analogy is far-reaching because of the Greek Church's national character: the Bulgarians thus wanted what the Greeks had already achieved (and from a dogmatic point of view, their demands were no more unfounded than those of the Greeks).¹³⁷ On the other hand, the Enlightenment critique of the Church

¹³⁴ Ivan Shishmanov, "Izvorite na 'Mati Bolgariya,'" in Shishmanov, *Izbrani sǎchineniya*, vol. 1, 166–193 (first published in 1926). Pharmakidis is mentioned as an inspiration for Bozveli (p. 192). Also Ivan Shishmanov, "Novi studii iz oblasti na bǎlgarskoto vǎzrazhdane. V. E. Aprilov, Neofit Rilski, Neofit Bozveli," *Sbornik na BAN*, vol. 21, *Klon Istoriko-filologichen i filosofsko-obshchestven* 13 (Sofia, 1926), 1–541, esp. 521–523; Danova, "Neofit Bozveli i grǎtskoto."

¹³⁵ Theoklitos Pharmakidis, "Neshto za izbiraneto na episkopite v grǎtskata Tsarigradska patriarshiya," (translated by Ivan Naydenov), *Bǎlgarski knizhitsi* 3, no. 8 (1860): 305–308; no. 9 (1860): 21–29. Pharmakidis's translation in *Bǎlgarski knizhitsi* was reviewed positively by Lyuben Karavelov, "Bolgarskie tserkovnye dela," *Nashe vremya* (1861) no. 5, no. 7, and no. 10 (reprinted in Lyuben Karavelov, *Publitsistkata na Lyuben Karavelov do izlizaneto na vestnik "Svoboda," 1860–1869*, ed. Mihail Dimitrov [Sofia, BAN, 1957]), 55–66, esp. 60–63.

¹³⁶ On the influence of the Greek enlighteners on the Bulgarian church struggles, see Shishmanov, "Uvod," 51; Shishmanov, "Novi studii," 521–522; Penev, *Istoriya na novata*, vol. 3, 100–103; Danova, "Kǎm vuprosa za rolyata," 50–51, 62; Danova, "Razrivǎt mezhdū," 58–62. Petko Slaveykov referred to Pharmakidis in arguing his views on the organization and governance of the Bulgarian Church at the Constituent Assembly in Tǎrnovo in 1879.

¹³⁷ This is pointed out, for example, by Petko Slaveykov, "Variatsii po cherkovniyat vǎpros," in Petko Slaveykov, *Sǎchineniya*, vol. 6 (Sofia, Bǎlgarski pisatel, 1980), 136–140 (initially published in *Makedoniya*, August 31, 1868); Seliminski, *Biblioteka*, vol. 2, 14; vol. 3, 76–77. See also Lyuben Karavelov, "Bǎlgarite ne tǎrsyat chuzhdoto, no ne davat i svoeto," in *Bǎlgarite i sǎsednite narodi*, 24–28 (first published in *Svoboda*, December 17, 1869). The author's arguments are that canonical law (just like historical rights) had lost its validity, replaced by "the right of nationality" and "human rights" (*chovechesko i narodno pravo*); that the Serbs, Romanians, Montenegrins and the Greeks themselves did not ask the Patriarch for permission when they created their independent Churches; and finally, that the Bulgarians also have a historical right to an independent Church, because they

was blunted even in the Greek case for a number of reasons and confined to a few intellectuals. In the Bulgarian case it was further blunted and redirected toward a nationalist anti-Greek critique at the expense of the social and ideological reformism of the Enlightenment (elements of which were still present).¹³⁸

The Bulgarian Church struggles were heralded by local campaigns in the 1820s against abuses by particular Greek bishops, first in Vratsa, then in the eparchy of Skopje, followed by Samokov and Stara Zagora. The first serious clash was with Bishop Panaret in the eparchy of Tărnovo in the late 1830s. The conflict was transferred to Constantinople, though the campaign (in 1838–1840) for the appointment of Neofit Bozveli as metropolitan of Tărnovo failed, thus adding strong personal motives to his embittered opposition to the Patriarchate. Gradually the struggles assumed a more definite anti-Greek and Bulgarian nationalist character, with demands for liturgy in Bulgarian and the appointment of (particular) Bulgarian bishops.¹³⁹ The Church struggles spread nationwide and received a strong impetus in the 1840s, when they acquired central representation and organization. This occurred as several resolute ecclesiastics and secular activists took the lead and organized the Bulgarian community in Constantinople, which consisted of some rich traders, thousands of artisans and a few persons with influence on the Sublime Porte (the Ottoman government). The impetuous Neofit Bozveli came to Constantinople in 1844 (after forced exile in 1841–1844 after the Tărnovo affair) and joined the more restrained Ilarion (born Stoyan) Mihaylovski (later to become Bishop Makariopolski) to lead the struggles. As already noted, the leaders of the Church struggles were graduates of Greek schools. Besides the two above-mentioned ecclesiastics they also included the secular activists Stoyan Chomakov, Gavril Krăstevich, Petko R. Slaveykov and Marko Balabanov.

The struggles became protracted and complicated, with increasing Bulgarian demands and embittered resistance by the Patriarchate, dramatic turns and manipulation by the Supreme Porte as well as the interference of foreign powers: Greece and the Greek Church in the Kingdom, France in support of Catholic and Uniate propaganda, and Russia in favor of the

had one in the past. About the use of the Greek example, see Danova, "Razrivăt mezhdū," 58–62.

¹³⁸ An elaboration in Nadya Danova, *Konstantin Georgiev Fotinov*, 165–166; Danova, "Kăm vāprosa za rolyata," 62–64.

¹³⁹ Markova, *Bălgarskoto tsărkovno*, 89–164.

unity of Orthodoxy. It is not necessary to recount these struggles at a central and local level, as they have been meticulously described in the historiography.¹⁴⁰ The main events were the address of Neofit Bozveli and Ilarion Makariopolski to the Sublime Porte in 1844 (in which they sought the support of the Ottoman government for some Bulgarian demands); their exile by the Patriarchate in 1845 based on the intercession of Russia (Neofit died in 1848 on Mount Athos, while Ilarion Makariopolski returned in 1850 and continued the struggle); the building up of a Bulgarian church and establishment of a Bulgarian Church commune in Constantinople (1848); the standstill in the 1850s caused by the Crimean War (1853–1856), when the Uniate movement of Dragan Tsankov was on the rise; the defiance against the Patriarchate at the Easter service on April 3, 1860, when Ilarion Makariopolski omitted mention of the Patriarch; the Patriarchate's proposal for Bulgarian Church autonomy (north of the Balkan range); the two plans of the Turkish government (Ali pasha) in 1868 to seek a resolution more favorable to the Bulgarians—an example of “divide and rule” policy; finally, the Ottoman firman of February 28, 1870, for the establishment of an autonomous Bulgarian Church (Exarchate); and as a consequence, the schism imposed on the Exarchate by the Patriarchate in 1872. One factor that helped resolve the Church question in the Bulgarians' favor was the shift in Russia's position, from supporting the Patriarchate (and the “indivisibility of Orthodoxy”) to supporting the Bulgarian claims, especially after the arrival of the Slavophile Count Nikolay P. Ignatiev (or Ignatieff) as Russian ambassador in Constantinople in 1864.

The establishment of a Bulgarian Church on the ethnic-linguistic principle not only represented an official recognition of the Bulgarian nation but in practice delineated territories under Church jurisdiction to be claimed by a future Bulgarian state. The “divide-and-rule” policy of the Ottoman government found expression in the notorious Article 10 of the firman of 1870 (taken from a preceding Ottoman plan), which envisioned the possibility for eparchies to join the Exarchate after a referendum won by two-thirds of the votes of the local population. This was a severe blow to Greek national claims in Macedonia and southern Thrace and signaled the beginning of an embittered rivalry between the Patriarchate and the Exarchate to win over the population of the disputed regions.

What matters from my point of view is not “who started first,” but how the actions of the two parties to the conflict (joined by the Greek state

¹⁴⁰ Nikov, *Văzhrazhdane*; Zina Markova, *Bălgarskoto tsărkovno*.

and, after its establishment, the Bulgarian state) became intertwined and entangled and how the two rival nationalisms mutually articulated and defined themselves. The Bulgarian Church Question presented the Greek nationalists with two challenges: first, to the Greek Megali idea (the “Great Idea”) with the emergence of a new rival for the Ottoman legacy, and secondly, to the Greek religious and cultural identity, because it undermined the Greek claim to represent Orthodoxy and stand for culture and civilization. I turn to these now.

Greek Nationalism as a Response to the Bulgarian Challenge

There are various interpretations of the Megali idea of Greek nationalism: as a dream of the restoration of Byzantium as a Greek empire (which Bulgarian national activists feared would come at the expense of the Slavs), as an idea of liberation and unification of all Greeks, as an idea of a Balkan federation, and so on. It seems useful to differentiate modern (“bourgeois”) nationalism such as the Megali idea proper, from premodern (clerical, “feudal”) imperial designs, such as Catherine the Great’s 1782–1783 plans (with the Austrian emperor Joseph II) to establish a great Greek empire in the Balkans with Constantinople as a capital and a Russian tsar, or the Greek Phanariot elite’s dreams of taking over the Ottoman Empire from within and transforming it into a Greek empire.¹⁴¹

As is widely agreed, the Megali idea was formulated as a national program for the first time by the politician Ioannis Kolettis in a parliamentary speech on January 14, 1844, in the context of defending the civil rights of the immigrant Greeks from outside the Greek kingdom (heterochthones) against the attempts of the “internal” (autochthonous) Greeks to monopolize the civil service.¹⁴² This text, much commented on for its historical

¹⁴¹ Danova, *Natsionalniyat vāpros*, 7, 16, 30–35.

¹⁴² An English translation of the relevant parts by Mary Kitroeff appears in *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeastern Europe (1770–1945): Texts and Commentaries*, vol. 2, *National Romanticism*, eds. Balázs Trencsényi and Michal Kopeček (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2007), 247–248. See Paschalis Kitromilides, “On the Intellectual Content of Greek Nationalism: Paparrigopoulos, Byzantium and the Great Idea,” in *Byzantium and the Modern Greek Identity*, eds. David Ricks and Paul Magdalino (London: Ashgate, 1998), 25–33. As Kitromilides points out, the Megali idea in Kolletis’s formulation was still very much attached to Hellenism under Enlightenment influence. It was only after the rehabilitation of Byzantium as part of Greek history that it took what Kitromilides considers its real form, that of a “project for resurrection of the Byzantine Empire in the shape of an expanded modern state” (p. 33), in which Byzantium served as “a telos to which the Greek state and Greek destinies were expected to strive

references and stated goals, contains the following ideas: a mediating role of the Greeks between East and West and their mission to enlighten the East; the unity of the Greek people scattered over vast territories beyond the small Greek kingdom and the existence of two centers of Hellenism: Athens and Constantinople (called “the vision and hope of all Hellenes”). Implicit in this idea is the hope for the political unity of the Greek nation. Arguably, this already points to an aspiration for Greek hegemony over the Balkans and Asia Minor to be achieved in close cooperation with the “external” Greeks, though some would prefer a more “idealistic” interpretation of the Greek mission as primarily cultural. The Great Idea became an official doctrine during Kolettis’s rule (1844–1847), though he worked more for the consolidation of the monarchy than for the liberation of the outside Greeks (as no opportunities for liberation presented themselves). The next important turning point in the crystallization of the national doctrine was the memoir of Mavrocordatos (leader of the Anglophile party) to King Otto in 1848, where he formulated the thesis of the “Slav danger” for Hellenism in Macedonia, that is, the danger from the Bulgarians supported by Russia.¹⁴³

The Megali idea of Greek nationalism has elicited a wide range of attitudes, from sympathetic to negative, and has been described in sharply contrasting terms. This is so because it contains assumptions, aspirations and claims considered legitimate by some and illegitimate by others (both participants and scholars) and because of the history of violence waged in its name or against it. The limits of scholarly distancing and “neutrality” (for the present author as well) can be seen in the following two descriptions by highly respected Bulgarian and Greek scholars.

All formulations of the Megali idea, according to Nadya Danova, make the interests of the Greek nation paramount and strive toward a vast future state greatly exceeding Greek ethnic borders (for which the small Greek kingdom was regarded as only a starting point). The most ambitious plans set the northern border at the Danube (thus excluding the possibility of a Bulgarian state), and the more “modest” reached up to the Balkan range, while the “minimalist” (or most “realistic”) included the closer (“historically Greek”) southern Thrace and Macedonia. All plans

to approximate” (p. 31). This required the appropriation of Byzantium in the historical theory of Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos and its ideological and political manipulation. As the author points out, the Great Idea never commanded universal acceptance among the political class.

¹⁴³ Danova, *Natsionalniyat vāpros*, 86–90, 108–110, 125–127.

included Asia Minor. The Megali idea also demonstrated a tendency to overlook or belittle (if not to deny) the existence of other ethnic groups in the territories claimed as Greek and an aspiration to Greek domination over them. It was able to capture the imagination of the Greek people. At the same time, it was exploited by the rulers for legitimating purposes and to divert attention from the internal problems of a malfunctioning democracy, social inequalities and acute social problems (such as the land problem) toward external expansion and a “civilizing mission.”¹⁴⁴

Greek nationalism in its Megali form (in Danova’s description) was a complex theoretical construction with many aspects—including historical, linguistic, geographical and legal—worked out by a number of authors. Especially important to its early development was the historian Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, who asserted continuity in Greek history from antiquity to the present (in response to the challenge by the German scholar Fallmerayer, below).¹⁴⁵ His basic contention is that the “spiritual tradition” is more important than the ethnic (and blood) continuity of a given population. This tradition was ancient Greek (Hellenic) according to the Enlightenment thinkers (like Adamantios Korais), who expressly rejected the legacy of the Byzantine Empire and of the Church of Constantinople. By contrast, Paparrigopoulos also included the Byzantine-Christian tradition, thus claiming a long continuity for the modern Greeks (expressed in the peculiar hybrid concept of “Helleno-Christianity”). Contemporary and later Greek historiography underlined the immortality of the Greek nation, its uniqueness, exceptionality and predestination, namely for a civilizing mission, in which the Hellenization of the non-Greeks was equated with civilizing the barbarians. The term “Hellenism” thus acquired a broader and more abstract meaning than the term “Greek nation,” namely a cultural (enlightening) and moral meaning connected with the proselytizing mission. Geographical science of the historical and ethnographic variety also contributed to the Megali idea by justifying territorial claims beyond the ethnic Greek boundaries and by the tendency to overlook or belittle the non-Greek ethnic groups in the claimed lands. The emergence and establishment of Greek ethnography was also designed to prove continuity

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 48, 107, 125, 267, 269.

¹⁴⁵ Paparrigopoulos, *Histoire de la civilisation*. A very perceptive treatment of his achievement appears in Kitromilides, “On the Intellectual Content.” This author also points out Paparrigopoulos’s influence on Bulgarian historiography (Vasil Zlatarov) and Romanian historiography (Nicolae Iorga) in the common concern for establishing national continuities and concentration on the medieval (Byzantine) era.

and glorify the nation, especially in the works of Spyridon Zambelios, who was the first to reclaim Christian Byzantine civilization as Greek (in the preface to his 1852 *Folk Songs of Greece*) and to coin the term “Helleno-Christianity.”¹⁴⁶ (However, it was Paparrigopoulos who created the grand historical narrative of Byzantium as a Greek empire.)

For those in the 1840s who expressly formulated the Megali idea, it embodied the liberation ideas of Rigas, Philiki Hetaireia (the secret “Society of Friends”) and the revolution of 1821. Danova distinguishes between the Megali idea as expansionist and assimilationist bourgeois nationalism, and the legitimate views of the Greek national revolutionaries from the era of the independence struggle, which were liberal and democratic and recognized the equality of other nationalities and creeds.¹⁴⁷ The problem in my view is that these are sides of the same coin and phases of the same national processes with quite fluid boundaries. Freedom fighters against foreign domination are naturally generous in order to cooperate with others, but this easily gives way upon liberation to rivalry and competition for more territory. The difference between good nationalism (patriotism) and bad nationalism (expansionism) comes from the perceived legitimacy of demands: freedom-fighting and being content with one’s own versus striving to possess more. But with competing nationalisms, what is one’s own is precisely the bone of contention, and there is hardly an objective judgment or an accepted “court” for passing such a judgment. This is not only because there are ethnically mixed territories but because the very criteria for laying claims are variously chosen in one’s own favor. The different timing of Balkan nationalisms also contributed to the “entanglement” and aggravation of the problem—the Greek one was most ambitious because it came first, when the neighboring peoples and would-be nations (unlike the Serbs and Romanians) were not “awake,” and claimed most of the Balkans for itself. When Bulgarian nationalism

¹⁴⁶ Danova, *Natsionalniyat vāpros*, 148–157. On the emergence and development of Greek ethnography and Spyridon Zambelios as its most representative figure, see Michael Herzfeld, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece* (New York: Pella Publishing Company), 1986.

¹⁴⁷ Danova, *Natsionalniyat vāpros*, 7–8, 127, 266–276. On the Great Idea, see also Ioannis Zelepos, *Die Ethnisierung griechischer Identität, 1870–1912: Staat und private Akteure vor dem Hintergrund der “Megali Idea,”* Südosteuropäische Arbeiten, no. 113 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2002), 52 ff. As Zelepos points out, the role of a (modern) “bourgeoisie” as the carrier of nationalism is quite problematic for the Balkans; instead, its carriers included intelligentsia, politicians, and later army officers.

emerged, it challenged the Greek claims as illegitimate and “expansionist” and in turn laid claim to territories.

One may ask: how could Greek nationalism exercise such a firm grip on the hearts and minds of the people? In fact (as stressed by the “cultural primordialist” theories of the nation, and recognized by Anthony Smith) each nationalism is not just ideology but a powerful feeling connected with “primordial” potencies and attachments (of blood, language, locality, tradition and so on). Besides being “imagined” and “invented,” the community is “felt” and “willed.”¹⁴⁸ In this sense Greek nationalism is no different from any other. But some specific factors and circumstances (to refer again to Nadya Danova) contributed to the overinflation of Greek national pride and sense of superiority. The feeling of superiority was nourished by a great historical (“ancestral”) tradition, maintained by elite social strata, the institution of the Great Church and the famous Greek schools. On top of this came the admiration of enlightened Europe, and Philhellene circles in particular, for ancient Greek civilization, which they considered to be the “cradle” of their own. This admiration translated into sympathy for the modern Greeks who were viewed as its descendents. At the same time, the discrepancy between this pride and the inadequately small Greek kingdom in its initial form frustrated and exasperated the Greek nationalists and created strong irredentist and expansionist impulses and even compulsions. Most of the traditional centers of Greek economic, cultural and intellectual life remained outside the Greek kingdom, which conditioned the significant (if not predominant) role of “external Hellenism” and the continuing economic and ideological exchanges between “internal” and “external” Greeks. Actually, the very fact that the Greeks were dispersed in numerous towns in the Balkans and Asia Minor (and the islands) and were often the most active and prosperous element there made them dream of vast territories. All this enhanced Greek ethnocentrism and produced an excess of national feeling.¹⁴⁹

A more sympathetic (and “empathic”) account of the Greek national idea and its propagation is presented by the Greek author Paschalis Kitromilides by making use of Benedict Anderson’s idea of the modern nation as an “imagined community.” It runs in basic outline as follows.

¹⁴⁸ Anthony Smith, *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2000), 21–26, 52–62; Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (London and New York: Routledge), 1998, 170–198.

¹⁴⁹ Danova, *Natsionalniyat vāpros*, 274.

Early Greek nationalism adopted from Romanticism (more specifically, from Fichte) the idea that a nation is defined mainly by the criterion of language. On the other hand, Greek was only one language among the linguistic—and in this sense, ethnic (“ethnographic”)—multiplicity of the Balkans. This presented Greek nationalism with the problem of a limited demographic potential, one much smaller than its territorial claims. The solution was to extend the nation by extending the Greek language and culture beyond the Greek ethnic group (as defined by native speakers of Greek). The first to think along these lines was Neophytos Doukas. His 1815 letter to Patriarch of Constantinople Cyril VI (1813–1818) urged a new “cultural crusade” to extend the boundaries of the Greek language and culture among the Bulgarians, Vlachs and Albanians as well as in Asia Minor. Doukas’s call was not heeded then (and was actually rebuffed by Ignatius, Archbishop of Wallachia, with the traditional unity of the faith). The Patriarchate embarked upon such a national crusade much later, when it was “nationalized”; it was then reproached by Greek nationalists for having missed the opportunity to Hellenize the others in early times. In any case, Doukas was symptomatic of an important shift in the idea of what constitutes a nation. From the assumption that the national community is defined by (the native) language, one came to the idea that linguistically foreign groups could enter the Greek nation if they accepted and assimilated Greek language and culture. The ideological preconditions were thus created for the Hellenizing linguistic-cultural crusade to expand the nation.¹⁵⁰

According to Kitromilides, the Greek nation was formed in an exemplary (Andersonian) manner by first “imagining it” and then embarking upon a (Hellenizing) cultural crusade in the East—a mission of cultural and national “proselytism” or “evangelism” to extend its “symbolic boundaries.” The crusade was directed by the Greek state (hence the state’s leading role in creating the nation) and conducted using Greek schools (with teachers trained at the University of Athens), the Greek autocephalic Church and later on the nationalized Patriarchate of Constantinople, as well as the Greek consulates and the Greek cultural clubs and associations (*sylogoi*). The mission consisted of spreading the Greek language

¹⁵⁰ Kitromilides, “Imagined Communities,” 30–33. Kitromilides dates the beginnings of modern Greek nationalism (and the modern idea of the nation—“ethnos” as community defined by language and cultural heritage) in the 1780s with Dimitrios Katartzis, high official in the court of Wallachia and advocate of the use of the vernacular in education and culture (26–28).

and education, thus paving the way for voluntary or “encouraged” identification with Hellenism. In addition to the “revival” of the Greek language in regions where it was spoken in the past and to the “politicization of ancient memories,” this secular cultural mission targeted non-Greek-speaking populations (Albanians, Vlachs, Slavs) and worked to transform religious (Orthodox) sentiment into Greek ethnic identity and national attachment; it even extended to non-Orthodox groups. Over time part of the non-Greek-speaking Orthodox populations were successfully socialized and identified with the Greek state, and after learning Greek they finally assumed their new identity and loyalties.¹⁵¹

This rather idealized description omits the coercive aspects of Hellenic proselytism—national “engineering” with its ugly side. More importantly, the scholarly theory used (nation as “imagined community”) subtly replicates the views of the Hellenizers in their cultural crusade and spreading of the Greek language (pride of the Greeks and vehicle of Hellenization), lending a veneer of legitimacy through apparent scholarly neutrality. Interestingly, the Hellenizing process was seen in similar terms by contemporary Bulgarian national activists, but with derisive connotations, such as “(day)dreaming” and “fantasizing” in the face of reality, and the Megali idea was often called a (nebulous) Greek “dream” (especially by Rakovski). The Greek national mission, which also ultimately rested on language as a medium of socialization and culture, played a “double game,” asserting that language was important, but only if it was Greek; if not, it was not so important because, after all, Greek could be learned and acquired. Conversely, Bulgarian nationalism, in its reaction to Greek nationalism, emphasized the linguistic criterion of a nation in the sense of mother tongue and rejected linguistic and cultural assimilation. Of course, the Bulgarian nation was no less “imagined” and had to be constructed of diverse ethno-symbolic materials. But because Bulgarian nationalism came later, it could not be so ambitious in its flight of imagination and had to restrict itself to linguistic confines (yet claiming Slav dialects as “Bulgarian” and Church Slavonic as “Old Bulgarian”). And it lacked a missionary quality as well. But rather than replicating the priorities (and implicitly arguing the rationale) of the two nationalisms, we would do better to put them on an equal footing as nation-building strategies that can be understood only in the context of their entanglement and mutual articulation.

¹⁵¹ Kitromilides, “Imagined Communities,” 33–51.

Aside from a Hellenizing mission and territorial aspirations, Greek nationalism (just like that of the Bulgarians) included definitions of identity, theories of origins, legitimating arguments, symbolism and an image of the enemy. It developed—at least from a certain point onwards—in confrontation with nascent Bulgarian nationalism and was decisively shaped by it, as Ioannis Zelepos shows convincingly.¹⁵² The reason for this special mutual significance, besides proximity and disputed mixed zones, was that Serbs and Romanians already had their autonomous polities, while the Albanians had not yet embarked on a national path of their own and remained “brothers” of the Greeks for some time to come. What follows is a description (leaning mostly on Zelepos) of the “course and discourses” (to borrow a phrase from Maria Todorova) of Greek nationalism in its engagement and entanglement with Bulgarian nationalism (where I also step in) and the outcome of their mutual articulation before concluding with a more analytical discussion of the resulting identities.

The modern concept of a Greek nation as developed by Neophytos Doukas (in 1815) and Adamantios Korais (1748–1833), but also by the Phanariot Panayiotis Kodrikas (in 1818), and implicit in the works of Rigas Velestinlis (1757–1798) in the beginnings of the Greek national movement, was based on language (and culture) under the influence of Western Enlightenment ideas. Characteristic of Greek Enlightenment thinkers (especially of Korais) was reverence for pagan Greek antiquity (so admired by Enlightenment thinkers in general) and its contributions to modern Western civilization, and rejection of the Byzantine imperial tradition, as well as criticism of the Orthodox Church. Such an identity strengthened claims of political independence, given the sympathy of the Philhellenes in Europe and the fact that Greece was commonly regarded as part of the Western cultural sphere. But this “pagan” identity conflicted with the traditional concept of identity based on confession and a confessional community, which resonated far more with the common people. Consequently it conflicted with the Patriarchate, which supported an exclusively confessional identity and was itself a continuation of the Byzantine tradition (a Church or even a polity “in captivity”). An ideological polarity thus emerged, symbolized by the dichotomies “Byzantium/antiquity,” “Constantinople/Athens,” “*Romios*/Hellene,” “East/West.” As interpreted

¹⁵² Zelepos, *Die Ethnisierung*. On the formation of Greek national identity (and the importance of the conflict with the Bulgarians), see also Livanios, “The Quest for Hellenism,” esp. 51–70.

by Zelepos, the Megali idea in Kolettis's formulation was an attempt to bridge the ideological polarities and offer an integrative element for the Greek national movement. Kolettis (as shown by Konstantinos Dimaras) established the historical unity of the Greek people (inside and outside the small kingdom), its desire for political unity and its civilizing mission in the East. In fact, the Megali idea (the motto of Greek nationalism) was quite vague and imprecise and lent itself to various interpretations—such as a “Greek republic” in the revolutionary model of Rigas, the restoration of Byzantium, and the mission to spread education and culture by invoking ancient Greece—and the political objectives following from it could be very different and even contradictory. But this was precisely what gave it such a strong appeal and the ability to overcome contradictions in constructing the Greek national identity, though it did not provide a coherent and concrete political program.¹⁵³

The Greek national elites were first alarmed during the Church conflict, when they saw a rival for the Ottoman legacy in the Balkans. It was in the encounter with the Bulgarian national movement as expressed in the Church conflict (and the ensuing rivalry for Macedonia and Thrace) that the political objectives of Greek irredentism (the Megali idea) took a clearer and more definite shape, and the Greek national identity evolved accordingly. The Bulgarian influence was felt after the Crimean War but became more pronounced with the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870. Bulgarian aspirations for national recognition presented a challenge to the traditional Greek identity (which had become almost equated with Orthodoxy). While Greeks tried to justify their leading cultural role among the Christian Balkan peoples by claiming superiority in civilization, the Bulgarian national awakening reinterpreted Greek hegemony as a spiritual “yoke” and undermined the Greeks' concomitant claim to inherit the Ottoman legacy. The Patriarch of Constantinople now came under attack from both Bulgarian and Greek nationalists (who wanted to see him as promoter of the Greek national idea), and this undermined his traditional role and function as “ethnarch,” that is, leader of the Orthodox population. The Greeks from the kingdom (as an analysis of the nationalist writings of the time shows) initially underestimated Bulgarian nationalism by denying it autonomy and interpreting it as instigated by Russia in its imperial designs—“Pan-Slavism.” Behind this was the idea that the

¹⁵³ Zelepos, *Die Ethnisierung*, 45–57, 267–268. An interpretation of Kolettis's Megali idea appears on 264–265.

Slavs (that is, Bulgarians) were not civilized enough to constitute a nation; this is seen in the designation "(Slavic) tribes" (*slavika fyła*) rather than "nation" (*ethnos*). In fact, the question of whether the Bulgarians were a "true" nation deserving of a political existence became topical precisely before the formation of the Bulgarian state; the predictably negative answer was explained by their "lack of national sentiment" and inglorious history of pillage and destruction (an example is N. Kokkonis's 1877 *History of the Bulgarians*). There also emerged the defensive construct of the Greeks as a supposedly isolated nation, "brotherless" with the possible exception of the Albanians (who did not yet show national aspirations). Still, the Greeks' main enemy in the 1870s remained the Turks, despite a degree of rapprochement with the Ottoman Empire (prompted by the rise of Bulgarian nationalism). At the same time the confrontation with Bulgarian nationalism buried the idea of cooperation with the Christian Balkan peoples as a way to solve the Greek national question.¹⁵⁴

The Bulgarian state was created (after the major Bulgarian uprising in April 1876) as a result of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878. The preliminary peace treaty of San Stefano in March 1878, which delineated a large Bulgarian state that included most of Macedonia, alarmed the Greek nationalists, even though it was invalidated by the Berlin Congress in June–July 1878. The Congress of Berlin endorsed a small Bulgarian principality north of the Balkan range and around Sofia, and an autonomous province south of the Balkan Range (called Eastern Rumelia), while Macedonia was returned to the Ottomans. In fact, "San Stefano" became the Great Bulgarian idea, the counterpart of the Greek Megali idea, and guided the foreign policy of the newly established Bulgarian state.

Greece's acquisition of Thessaly in 1881 gave Greece a border with Macedonia, which henceforth became the primary objective of Greek irredentism. The thesis of the "Slavic deluge" was developed in this context by M.D. Seizanis (in an 1879 work), who urged the Greeks to stand against it

¹⁵⁴ Zelepos, *Die Ethnisierung*, 85–108, 271. From a somewhat different point of view, the changing attitude of the Greek nationalists toward the neighboring peoples and their national ambitions is traced by Basil Gounaris, "Constructing and Deconstructing a Common Balkan Past in Nineteenth-Century Greece," in *Developing Cultural Identity in the Balkans*, eds. Raymond Detrez and P. Plas (Brussels: P.I.E. and Petre Lang, 2005), 195–209. Gounaris identifies three phases in constructing the Balkan past, namely, the harmonious phase of "brothers in history," followed by a cooling of relations and critiques of the "artificial statehood" of the neighboring nations and finally, unrestrained irredentism and the demonization of the Bulgarians in particular. About denying "nationhood" to the Bulgarians, see also Livanios, "Christians, Heroes," 77–78.

and hold back the tide. This was a rather pessimistic and defensive view of the situation. It also marked the beginning of the demonization of the Slavs, who were again described as “tribes” (though it is not clear whether Seizanis counted them among the peoples of the “European family”). In some writings by various authors published in 1880 and 1881 (in *Aion*) the nationalism of the Balkan peoples, including the Greek “Panhellenismus,” is referred to as *Fyletismos*, meaning “ethnic thinking” (the ground for declaring the schism on the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1872). But Orthodoxy was instrumentalized here in favor of the Greeks, as Greek identity (Greekness), while the other ethnic communities were denied a separate identity (as heretical *Fyletismos*), which places these works within the scope of nationalism (and not of pre-national religious thinking).

The union of Eastern Rumelia with the Bulgarian Principality in 1885 presented the Greek nationalists with yet another shock. This resulted in an ideological focus on the Bulgarians (“Pan-Bulgarianism”) instead of the “Slav deluge” and intensification of the Bulgarians’ “enemy image,” especially in the daily press (such as the newspapers *Palingenesia* and *Aion*). At the same time the kinship of the Bulgarians with the Slav peoples was cast into doubt with the Turanian hypothesis (by Emmanouil Roidis in particular), and kinship in general came to be defined according to the ethnic criterion of blood. The idea that Greeks were a “brotherless nation” (that is, without a natural ally) was said to result from their having no ethnic kinship with others; this also corresponds with the break of the ecumenical (universal) concept of Greekdom. Against this background Dimitrios Vikelas’s work *Le rôle et les aspirations de la Grèce dans la question d'Orient* (1885) stands out for its quite different ideas: the treatment of the Bulgarians’ national aspirations as legitimate (though exaggerated, as he thought the Bulgarians were less numerous than Greeks), the clairvoyantly precise delineation of the Greek territories (coinciding with those of the present-day Greek state), the rejection of the Megali idea and the dream of Constantinople as chimera. By recognizing the national movements of the Christian populations in the Balkans on basically the same level, he broke with the idea of the cultural superiority of the Greeks and of their civilizing mission, and thus with the maximalist claims in the Greek national question. In addition, he identified the Greek state as the major protagonist of the national question.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ Zelepos, *Die Ethnisierung*, 125–127, 134–143. Examples of demonization of the Bulgarians in Gounaris, “Constructing and Deconstructing,” 201–203.

The rivalry with the Bulgarians for Macedonia (and Thrace) gave the strongest impetus to the definitive shaping of Greek nationalism and national identity. The traditional religious-confessional criterion, which was previously applied to the irredenta, was too weak to clearly distinguish Greek from Slav or Bulgarian identity. Not only was Orthodoxy shared, but it was easy to shift allegiances (often under pressure) between the already nationalized Greek Patriarchate and the Bulgarian Exarchate, with its growing number of communities. The linguistic-cultural criterion was becoming increasingly important, and the propagation of the Greek language and culture was taken over by the Greek state (after the division of competencies and areas of activities with the Patriarchate). But knowledge of the Greek language and immersion in Greek culture depended too much on education and social status (especially if Greek was not a native language), and even this did not guarantee Greek consciousness, which was itself too abstract, “subjective” and changeable. It also proved unsatisfactory for political instrumentalization in building up political loyalties to the Greek state.

Under these circumstances and exigencies, the construction of common (Greek) descent and thus “ethnicity” proved to be the best solution because it appeared to be an unchangeable and irreversible fact. The ethnic approach—anticipated in the speculations about kinship between Bulgarians and Russians or “Turanians” and the idea of the Greeks as a “brotherless” nation—was now fully developed. It thus became possible to speak of “Christian Greeks,” “Muslim Greeks” and “Jewish Greeks” (in other words, claiming Greek ethnicity—*ethnotis*—and giving it priority over religious confession), as well as about “Albanophones” or Albanian-speaking Greeks, “Bulgarophones” or Bulgarian-speaking Greeks, in both cases claiming Greek ethnicity (through “origins”) and making it more important than the non-Greek mother tongue; and even about “Muslim Albanophones,” in which confession and language matter less than “real” or “factual” Greek descent.¹⁵⁶ Through such re-categorization practically any group or number of persons could be claimed as “in fact” Greek, regardless of mother tongue and confession, on the basis of an ethnic factor (descent), which seemed more “objective” and took priority. This gave Greek nationalism a sharp edge and the possibility to take the

¹⁵⁶ Zelepos, *Die Ethnisierung*, 152–155, also 249–250; Livianos, “The Quest for Hellenism,” 59–61. As Livianos points out, some even went as far as to claim Greek descent and national sentiment for Christian Arabs in Syria and Palestine.

offensive. Ironically, a most fictitious, arbitrary and unprovable feature—"descent"—was elevated to the most "objective" and indisputable identifier of nationality. According to Zelepos, the transformation of Greek nationalism toward "ethnicizing" the Greek identity took place decisively in the 1890s. Still, confessional and linguistic-cultural identities continued to be used in appropriate irredenta contexts.

The 1890s was also the time when an image of the Bulgarians as a "hereditary enemy" of the Greeks was constructed. After the union of Bulgaria with Eastern Rumelia in 1885 (and largely in reaction to the crisis that ensued), the Bulgarian national movement became entirely dissociated in Greek perceptions from the Slav context. Now, instead, the question was raised about the identity of the Bulgarians, their descent and kinship with other peoples. The depiction of the Bulgarians as a "hereditary enemy" of the Greeks took place mostly in historiography. Early on, Paparrigopoulos in his *History of the Greek Nation* (1860–1877) paid a great deal of attention to the wars of the Byzantine Empire against the Bulgarians. He differentiated clearly between the proto-Bulgars, whom he defined as ethnically Turkic, and the Slav tribes that they conquered in the Balkans. His construction of the continuity of Greek history also provided the framework for tracing a historical continuity of the Greek-Bulgarian conflict and presenting the Bulgarians as a "hereditary enemy." Other historians after him elaborated on the perennial Bulgarian-Greek hostility. E. Kyriakydis (*History of Modern Greekdom*, Athens, 1892) subscribed to the Turanian theory of the origins of the (proto-)Bulgars and their kinship with the "Turks". He painted an especially negative picture of the Bulgarians under Ottoman domination—as "historically absent," enduring foreign rule with animal-like apathy, lacking national self-awareness, "unworthy" and expecting the Greeks to care for them (thus countering Bulgarian accusations that the Greeks had left them in ignorance under the Turkish "yoke"). As for the fact that much of the population in the Balkans spoke Bulgarian, he explained it thus: many Greeks learned Bulgarian (and became Bulgarophone) because it was easier for them, being culturally superior and "masters," to learn the language of their "servants" and illiterate peasants than the reverse. He also identified modern Greeks with the *Romios* of Byzantium and claimed they had a civilizing and Hellenizing function, though he downplayed its effect upon the Bulgarians (aside from Christianization) in order to stress the poor quality of their ethnic stock and lack of natural abilities. Nationalism was pursued in philology (linguistic maps of Macedonia such as that of Kleanthis Nikolaidis of 1899, which reflected not realities, but national claims, more or less where the border is now), ethnography and "national psychology" (*Volkskunde*). The

“conservative” Christian-Orthodox standpoint existed in parallel represented by the weekly *O Logos*, which criticized the Bulgarians for “unbrotherly” conduct toward the Greeks in Bulgaria (especially during the anti-Greek campaign of 1906). The enemy image of the Bulgarians also found its way into the school textbooks of the time, especially in geography textbooks and essays.¹⁵⁷

The ethnicizing of the Greek national identity went through its last phase during the Macedonian conflict of 1904–1908. The “enemy image” of the Bulgarians then assumed grotesque traits of demonization with such writers as A. Spiliotopoulos, D. Anastasopoulos, N. Kazazis and the anonymous author of *The Bulgarians, Once and Today*. They focused on descent and “race” (rejection of the Slav component, Turanian hordes, Huns, Finnish Huns, tribes from Siberia), culture (no script, no chronicles or relics, no heroes), social and moral order (a mass of people without family, religion or home; dirty and disgusting) and national character. As noted by Zelepos, the pseudo-genealogies were guided by the logic that the more distant the initial place of origins from Europe (such as Turan in Central Asia), the weaker the historical claims over the contested areas and the stronger the Greek nationalist claims (whose strongest arguments came from even earlier history). The rejection of the (Indo-)European belonging of the (proto-)Bulgars, though not of the Slavs, served to denigrate them as incapable of civilization and to present the conflict as one between races.¹⁵⁸ It was also then, and especially around the time of the Balkan Wars, that Greek history textbooks went so far as to portray Bulgarians as less than human.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Zelepos, *Die Ethnisierung*, 155–161, 170–171, 175–178, 273; Livanios, “Christians, Heroes,” 76–79. About the image of Bulgarians in history textbooks in particular, see Constantinos Chatzopoulos, “The Bulgarians in the Greek Textbooks of History of the Second Half of the 19th Century,” *Balkan Studies* 39, no. 2 (1998): 271–287. As Chatzopoulos points out, the Bulgarians entered Greek history textbooks as a “hereditary enemy” of the Greeks (Byzantium) with the reform of the curricula in 1880, when Paparrigopoulos’s framework of national history was adopted. But the presentation of the Bulgarian enemy in history was rather moderate and restrained and not disparaging, due to the prevailing positivism and the German pedagogical methods. The hostile attitudes of that time were more pronounced in geography textbooks (concerning the “Macedonian question” in particular) and in history and geography pamphlets.

¹⁵⁸ Zelepos, *Die Ethnisierung*, 200–208. An example of demonization before the European audience is Neokles Kazazis, *Griechen und Bulgaren in neunzehnten und zwanzigsten Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1908). Another is Neokles Kazazis, *I psychologia ton Voulgaron* (Athens, 1907).

¹⁵⁹ Starting at the beginning of the twentieth century, history textbooks expressed national antagonism and chauvinism, and this reached a peak during the Balkan wars, as shown in the inquiry of Dimitris Glenos, *La Grèce. Enquête*, vol. 2 (Paris: Donation Carnegie pour la paix internationale, 1927).

Yet in this phase of Greek nationalism, an alternative developed to the model of the nation-state (and to descent as a criterion of a nation), which tried to rescue the ecumenical cultural claim of Greekdom—the so-called “Oriental ideal” (Anatoliko Idaniko) of Athanasios Souliotis-Nikolaidis and Ion Dragoumis for a vast Eastern polity based on Hellenic-Greek culture. It was a continuation of the “Helleno-Osmanism” (or Helleno-Ottomanism) of the rich Greek circles in the irredenta, that is, the idea of working not for the destruction of the Ottoman Empire but for its gradual internal Graecization (Hellenization) based on economic and cultural superiority over the Turks.¹⁶⁰ This amounted to an “evolutionary” variant of the Megali idea. In the new political conjuncture, the “Oriental ideal” was directed primarily against Western Europe and its civilization (the “Franks”). What is important in this context is that the Bulgarians, as an Eastern people, were given a place in the envisioned Eastern polity based on their distinctive culture and civilization (though Dragoumis, deeply involved in the Macedonian issue, could not free himself of the enemy image of the Bulgarians).¹⁶¹

The ideological updating of the Greek national identity by its ethnization paralleled the political modernization of the Greek state (with the reforms of Venizelos) and the state’s monopolization of the national question. The state-national principle gradually imposed itself in the (unavowed) coupling of the concepts “nation” and “territory,” which specified the irredentist objectives of what exactly should be included in the Greek state (instead of the “invisible Hellas” of the Megali idea). These were realized in the Balkan Wars and accompanied by massive social engineering that resulted in an “ethnically homogeneous” state. The imposition of the ethnic concept of Greekness presented a simplified basis of identity and facilitated loyalty to the state; the price was the sacrifice of the Megali

¹⁶⁰ It is interesting to note that a similar idea of taking over the Ottoman Empire from within was cherished by some Bulgarian notables in Constantinople, such as the Greek-educated Stoyan Chomakov, obviously under Greek influence. See Iliya Todev, “D-r Stoyan Chomakov ili ot osvoboditeln kăm imperski natsionalizăm,” in Iliya Todev, *Kăm drugo minalo ili prenebregvani aspekti na bălgarskoto natsionalno vāzrazhdane* (Sofia: Vigal, 1999), 149–164.

¹⁶¹ Zelepos, *Die Ethnisierung*, 207–235. A somewhat different interpretation appears in A.J. Panayotopoulos, “The ‘Great Idea’ and the Vision of Eastern Federation: A Propos of the Views of I. Dragoumis and A. Souliotis-Nikolaidis,” *Balkan Studies* 21, no. 2 (1980): 331–365. On the attitude of Stephanos Dragoumis and his son Ion towards the Bulgarians, see Yura Konstantinova, “The Place and the Role of Stephanos Dragoumis in the Greek Political Elite in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century,” *Études balkaniques* 44, no. 2 (2008): 55–81, esp. 70–73, 77.

idea and of the universal (ecumenical) concept of Greek identity, which lost its *raison d'être* with the catastrophe in Asia Minor in 1922.¹⁶²

After this historical explanation, I will consider the issue of Greek identity and the concept of Greek nation in a more systematic manner, by marshaling the various features put forward and their advantages or disadvantages in reference to Greek territorial aspirations and to the rival Bulgarian nationalism. The question "Who is Greek?" and its corollary "Which territories are Greek?" were decided on various criteria and defended with various arguments. Before tackling them separately, let me list them here: language, confession, culture, ethnicity and descent in particular, self-identification (sentiment and loyalty), history and who fought for Greek freedom.¹⁶³

The notion that language (often coupled with culture) defined Greek identity and modern Greek nationhood was emphasized by representatives of the Greek Enlightenment such as Adamantios Korais, Neophytos Doukas and Athanasios Psalidas. This was the contemporary idea of a nation prevalent in the West, and it dovetailed with the Greek pride in the ancient Greek language and its great literature. The problem was that some of the territories claimed by the Megali idea were populated with non-Greek-speakers. The problem was dealt with in various ways, especially (as Doukas did) by appealing for an educational-cultural crusade to spread Greek language and culture. In the later conflict over Macedonia, language as a criterion worked in favor of the Bulgarians, who claimed the Macedonian Slav dialects as Bulgarian. Thus the Greeks had to replace language with other criteria, such as Greek consciousness as expressed in belonging to the Patriarchate, ethnic descent and historical rights, while all along pursuing a policy of spreading the Greek language and education. Language therefore declined in importance for the definition of Greekness when the Enlightenment gave way to Romanticism, that is, precisely when language became the major feature of nationality in the West. This circumstance complicated efforts to justify Greek claims to the Western powers. After the Balkan Wars, when the Greek state took a definitive shape, it embarked upon a strongly "integralist" course to make

¹⁶² Zelepos, *Die Ethnisierung*, 259–262, 274–275. An example of the "image of the enemy" of the Bulgarians from this time is Grigorios Papamichail's 1913 article "Greek Problems," where the Bulgarians are described as "a rabble of wild Tataromongols."

¹⁶³ On that, see also John Koliopoulos and Thanos Veremis, *Greece: The Modern Sequel: From 1821 to the Present* (London: Hurst and Company, 2002), 268–279, 373–375.

a “homogeneous” nation through Greek language and education in the new territories (and by suppressing the other languages).¹⁶⁴

National identity for the Greeks has also been based on culture (often in conjunction with language and education), with the characteristic claim of “high culture” and civilization, based both on history (the Hellenic and the Byzantine civilization) and the present and linked with a civilizing mission in the future. The old distinction between Hellenes and “barbarians” (that is, those uncivilized and devoid of culture) that expressed the Greeks’ pride and sense of superiority was replicated by modern Greeks vis-à-vis the neighboring peoples, who were looked down upon as uneducated simpletons. But this criterion was somewhat weakened when the universalist ideas of the Enlightenment gave way to the particularism and relativism of Romanticism (Herderian cultural relativism). Every nation could then claim its own cultural values on an equal footing and even challenge those of the others.

In general, Greek nationalism (that of the Megali idea) was not just state-based irredentism and expansionism but was driven by a sense of cultural mission, namely the Hellenization of peoples south of the Balkan range and on both sides of the Aegean. In its most utopian form it strove toward a Greek-dominated multinational, Orthodox, Hellenized state with Constantinople as its capital. The exalted notion of pan-Hellenism has been compared to the ideas of “manifest destiny,” “*mission civilisatrice*,” “the white man’s burden,” the “Third Rome” (of Pan-Slavism) and Pan-Germanism.¹⁶⁵ In this it certainly differed from the more common and less ambitious Bulgarian nationalism.

Confession was a traditional criterion of identity. Like culture it was also universalist (ecumenical). With the rise of nationalism, it became instrumentalized to define a more inclusive Greek national identity. It served its purpose because Orthodoxy was identified with Greekness and the other ethnic communities were concealed behind the “Greek Orthodox” designation, which conflated religion with ethnicity and paved the way for their assimilation. The Bulgarians’ break with the Patriarchate dealt a blow to the “universalism” of that concept and restricted its usefulness. Still, it could be important in other cases, as with the Turkish-speaking but Orthodox Karamans in Asia Minor. In the Macedonian context a contest

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 248–251, 270–272.

¹⁶⁵ See Stephen Xydis, “Modern Greek Nationalism,” in *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, eds. Peter Sugar and Ivo Lederer (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1969), 207–258, esp. 235–243.

for membership took place between the Exarchate and the increasingly nationalized Patriarchate, and belonging to the latter was useful for claiming Greekness beyond the range of Greek language. But from the point of view of the contemporary European notions of a nation (and thus in the eyes of the Great Powers), confession was not a very convincing criterion. Yet Orthodox faith remained, and continues to be, a very important defining feature of Greek identity (more so, it seems, than to the Bulgarians). This was especially true of uneducated peasants, who defined themselves as Christians, to the despair of the nationalists (who insisted on language or ethnicity). It required a war between the Christians in order to split the religious sense of commonality (including with the Bulgarians). Orthodoxy (plus Greek education) played a primary role in forging the Greek nation by joining Christian Albanian- and Vlach-speakers as well, and the war in Macedonia was more easily understood by the population when translated in terms of Patriarchate ("old faith") versus Exarchate ("schismatic" Bulgarians, a sort of "heresy"). The Greeks were thus very successful (no less than the Serbs and the Bulgarians) in "nationalizing" religion and harnessing Christianity to their national cause, even though the Patriarchate might have appeared to be in retreat.¹⁶⁶

Descent (and ethnicity as defined by it) is another criterion for national identity and belonging. Modern Greeks claimed the ancient Hellenes as their illustrious ancestors—a pedigree that gave them a strong sense of pride. The designation "Hellene" was accepted as the modern Greek ethnonym, not *Graikos*, as Westernized Greeks called themselves, transliterating into Greek the names *Graeci*, *Grecs* or "Greeks," by which they were called in the West. Descent and in this particular sense also ethnicity¹⁶⁷ became increasingly important in the conflict with the Bulgarians in Macedonia (as seen previously). Its attraction for the Greeks lay in its seeming objectivity and permanence but also in the opportunity it provided to claim various ethnic groups irrespective of language and faith as related to the ancient Greeks in "kinship" (for example, the Albanians through putative common descent from the Pelasgians) or as Hellenized in the past. Greek ethnic claims stand behind the designations "Albanophones" (Albanian-speaking Greeks), "Bulgarophones" (Bulgarian-speaking Greeks) and even "Muslim Albanophones" (Albanian-speaking

¹⁶⁶ As convincingly argued by Livanios, "The Quest for Hellenism," 61–67.

¹⁶⁷ Ethnicity can be defined by other features as well, such as customs and other cultural features, and physical traits. A certain custom—the feast day known as *slava*—was used by the Serbs as an identifying feature of Serbs in Macedonia.

Muslim Greeks). This became a very effective tool to meet the Bulgarian challenge in Macedonia, based on the linguistic definition of a nation, by dislodging language from its primeval position.

Not only descent but history in general was a powerful resource for identity-building, and historical arguments were adduced to justify claims for peoples and territories. The cult of ancient Greece cultivated by Greek Enlightenment intellectuals (such as Korais) and among the Philhellenes in the West provided the Greeks with an illustrious ancestry, but not with sufficient territory in the Balkans. Things changed with the appropriation of Byzantine history and the Orthodox Church (both rejected by Korais), which created continuity between ancient Hellenism and the modern Greeks by supplying the missing link, but also added vast territories to be claimed as part of the Byzantine legacy. This was achieved by the historian Paparrigopoulos, followed by other historians (such as E. Kyriakidis) and ethnographers (such as Zambelios) and was largely a response to Fallmerayer's thesis that the Hellenes were assimilated by Slav settlers and Albanians, who were the actual forefathers of the modern Greeks. Most importantly, continuity was asserted on the basis of culture (language, literature, values) and less on ethnicity (though with certain ethnic core). Thus the Greeks could claim that they had culturally assimilated the new settlers, imprinting them with the Hellenic spirit. This cultural continuity allowed the Greeks to claim that they had Hellenized various neighboring peoples over time and had included them in their cultural commonwealth, including Thracians, ancient Macedonians (if they were not entirely equated with the Hellenes), Albanians, Slavs and Vlachs.¹⁶⁸ They could thus claim for their nation other ethnic groups on historical grounds through their Hellenized or culturally assimilated forefathers: Hellenized Slavs, in an inversion of Fallmerayer's Slavicized Hellenes. Some went so far as to claim that speakers of other languages had "lost" or "forgotten" their original Greek language and ethnicity, with the corollary that these had to be "remembered" and "regained."¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Basil Gounaris, "Model Nation and Caricature State: Competing Greek Perspectives on the Balkans and Hellas (1797–1896)," in *The Making of Modern Greece: Nationalism, Romanticism, and the Uses of the Past (1797–1896)*, eds. Roderick Beaton and David Ricks (Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2009), 137–147, esp. 140–142.

¹⁶⁹ Such assertions by a Greek anonymous author in the pamphlet *War Camp or the Triumph of the Century* elicited the reaction of the Bulgarian national activist Rayko Zhinzifov, "Mnenie na grătski publitsist za Rusiya vāv vrāzka s bālgarskiya vāpros," *Den*, November 28, 1864 (reprinted in Rayko Zhinzifov, *Sāchineniya* [Sofia: Bālgarski pisatel, 1969]), 225–235. The Greek author argued that contemporary Bulgarians were descended

Greek historical claims in all these meanings were hard to refute, and the only way for other emerging nations to challenge and combat them was by searching for their own roots and forefathers and reconstructing their own history, thus redefining the past and breaking the Greek monopoly over it, as well as by inventing counter-myths.¹⁷⁰ In the Bulgarian case (to be considered later) there were several competing theories of origins, especially regarding the proto-Bulgars who conquered the Slavs and established the early medieval state in the Balkans in 680. It was also through historiography that the Greeks were turned into enemies, against whom many wars were fought and many glorious victories won. Similarly, it was possible to claim the right to territories through conquest, such as the inclusion of Macedonia in the Bulgarian medieval kingdom with Ohrid as the capital of Tsar Samuil. Interestingly, the early Slavs could be claimed both by Bulgarian nationalists, by presenting the proto-Bulgars as defenders of the Slavs in Macedonia and elsewhere from Byzantine assimilation, and by Greek nationalists, by presenting the Byzantine Empire as protector of the Slavs from the invading proto-Bulgars.

Greek “consciousness” or “sentiment” (*syneidisis* or *phronima*) was another criterion of identification with or loyalty to the Greek national community, though it was quite subjective and subject to fluctuating loyalties.¹⁷¹ In fact, like ethnic descent, it helped where other criteria favored the opposite side. It was important for Hellenized ethnic groups or persons, especially Vlachs, Albanians and Bulgarians. In such cases it was typically considered as superseding language in importance (especially in the northern irredenta), though (or precisely because) it could be subject to development, manipulation and transformation.

from “Thracian-Moesian” Greeks who were conquered by the proto-Bulgars (presented as “Mongolo-Scythians”) and lost their original Greek language.

¹⁷⁰ Anthony Smith’s “ethno-symbolic” approach to nationalism is particularly relevant here (and for the nations emerging from empires in Eastern Europe in general) because of the recognition of the ethnic origins of nations and the role of ethnic myths, symbols and memories in the (selective) construction of the national identity. See Smith, *The Nation in History*, 62–77; Anthony Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009); Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, 170–198. The problem is that, if read (or misread) in a certain way, it is too close to traditional nationalist historiography in the Balkans, and for that reason Smith is quite popular in the region, where the radical modernist approach was hardly applied. His “radical” modernist point of departure is thus not appreciated.

¹⁷¹ Koliopoulos and Veremis, *Greece*, 273; Livianos, “The Quest for Hellenism,” 66. While the Bulgarian nationalists claimed that everyone who chose to belong to the Exarchate was Bulgarian, Greek nationalists responded that all those who remained under the Patriarchate were “Greek” because of their “national sentiment.”

Who fought for Greek freedom was a criterion of importance mostly in the initial post-revolutionary era, when many combatants from various ethnic groups and various parts of the Balkans settled in the newly established Greek kingdom and were granted Greek citizenship. In addition, it had a symbolic importance for laying claims to various territories, on the grounds that they had participated in the liberation struggles (why else should they fight for the Greeks?). It even led to their symbolic “representation” in the Greek parliament (particularly in 1843).

All in all, Greek national activists had a vast repertoire of criteria for belonging to the Greek nation, developed over time. The criteria cited as a basis for territorial claims changed with time, and most often several criteria were cited simultaneously to embrace a larger territory and population. The criteria were adjusted strategically to the context and situation of a particular irredenta, claiming its Greek belonging based on one criterion here and on another criterion there. As Pollis-Koslin remarked:

“The modern principle of self-determination, which Wilson and Lenin had preached, proved to be a handy and persuasive argument when Greek-speaking populations were clearly involved and statistically in majority in a certain region in dispute. In other cases, as in that of northern Epirus (southern Albania) where the linguistic criterion was less useful, the concept of Greek ‘consciousness’ was put forward. For certain territories (such as northern Epirus), historical grounds, too, were invoked: the fact that ‘from times immemorial’ the particular area had come within the sphere of Hellenism, agent and creator of a superior civilization.”¹⁷²

One example of the strategic use of criteria to define Greek identity is a document of the “Association for the Propagation of Greek Letters” (founded in Athens in 1869) to Minister of Foreign Affairs Theodoros Diliannis. The document defines the realm of the Hellenes (Greekdom) to include: a) pure Greeks, b) kindred peoples that identified with Hellenism and used Greek alongside their own “dialect” (Helleno-Albanians, Helleno-Vlachs), c) people who spoke some dialect (such as Bulgarian) at home, but used Greek in their Church (namely, the Patriarchate) and schools.¹⁷³ Such claims could be taken as reality by the protagonists in the irredentist

¹⁷² A. Pollis-Koslin, “The Megali Idea: A Study of Greek Nationalism” (PhD dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1958), 349–352, quoted in Xydis, “Modern Greek Nationalism,” 243. A similar interpretation is in Koliopoulos and Veremis, *Greece*, 268. According to them the shifts of meanings and definitions of terms and criteria of the Greek national identity were the result of changing needs and circumstances.

¹⁷³ Danova, *Natsionalniyat vāpros*, 230.

struggles and reinforce their dedication to the cause. For example, the celebrated Greek officer Pavlos Melas came to believe that Slav speakers in Macedonia were actually Greeks who had forgotten their language or were deprived of the benefits of Greek education and civilization.¹⁷⁴ It was, of course, wars that ultimately decided what should belong to whom, but the readiness to go to war and what the wars were fought for and over was decided by the “preliminary” work of nationalist thinkers and activists, who elaborated claims, justifications, beliefs and convictions.

Bulgarian Nationalism as a Response to Greek Nationalism

Bulgarian nationalism developed “classically” as linguistic nationalism, making language the defining trait of the nation (*narodnost*) in reaction to the perceived threat of assimilation by the Greeks through language (and culture). Later on language served to distinguish Bulgarians from Greeks and to help lay claim to disputed territories (Macedonia and Thrace). The Bulgarian National Revival under Ottoman rule was anticipated by a history book, *Istoriya slavenobolgarskaya* (History of the Slavo-Bulgarians), written in 1762 by the monk Paisiy from Hilendar Monastery on Mount Athos. This short history contains a passionate appeal for awakening and national consciousness in opposition to the Greeks and motivated by a glorious past, when the Bulgarians had a kingdom and a patriarchate and won victories against their enemies. Here are the famous words from the introduction to this work, which stress the “centrality of language” (and history):

But there are those, who do not care to know about their own Bulgarian people and turn to foreign ways and foreign tongue; and they do not care for their Bulgarian language but learn to read and speak Greek and are ashamed to call themselves Bulgarians. O, you senseless fool! Why are you ashamed to call yourself Bulgarian and do not read and speak your own language? Or had the Bulgarians no kingdom and state? . . . But why, stupid, should you be ashamed of your people and linger after a foreign tongue? Here, you say, the Greeks are wiser and more cultivated, and the Bulgarians are simple and stupid, and have no refined speech; therefore, it is better to become part of the Greeks. But look, you senseless, there are many more people wiser and more glorious than the Greeks. Has any Greek abandoned his tongue and

¹⁷⁴ Koliopoulos and Veremis, *Greece*, 376.

learning and people? . . . You, Bulgarian, do not be fooled, but know your people and language, and learn your language!¹⁷⁵

Language was defined by the Bulgarian enlightener Konstantin Fotinov (1844) as the “face” of each people, showing its habits and customs: “Language, in fact, by binding thus some class of persons in a peculiar people (*narod*) and by separating it from other such classes, functions as a divider or a distinctive sign (or mark) of each people.”¹⁷⁶

The basic significance of language was explained ideologically and theoretically most often with implicit or explicit reference to the Greeks. A nationality (*narodnost*) was defined in 1867 by Petko Slaveykov as an “estate of people connected among themselves in language, descent, customs, some common moral qualities, a mutual sympathy, the same aspirations, wishes to have a good government.”¹⁷⁷ On top of that comes a shared former political life: a common history, memories and (reminiscent of Ernest Renan) joys and sorrows, hopes and fears. Still, Slaveykov affirms the centrality of language, not incidentally in his journal *Makedoniya*: it is the “root” and “soul” of the nationality, he says; a people without its own language is dead.¹⁷⁸ Elsewhere, he insists that language (particularly the mother tongue) and descent are the basis of nationality, while religion, which initially was also a defining feature, has turned into a tool of politics (implicitly, of the Greeks) and has become a “false sign.”¹⁷⁹ This was so because the Greeks equated Orthodoxy with Hellenism (Greekdom), and it was through the shared religion (*edinoverie*) that the Greeks tried to Hellenize the Bulgarians.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁵ Translation by Maria Todorova, “The Course and Discourses of Bulgarian Nationalism,” in *Eastern European Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Peter Sugar (Washington, DC: American University Press, 1995), 55–102, esp. 74–75. Maria Todorova then affirms the “centrality of language” as a feature of Bulgarian nationalism.

¹⁷⁶ Konstantin Fotinov, “Yazik i narod,” *Lyuboslovie* 1, no. 6 (1844), 27–29. Quoted from Danova, *Konstantin Georgiev Fotinov*, 368–369.

¹⁷⁷ Petko Slaveykov, “Narodnost,” *Makedoniya*, August 12, 1867 (reprinted in Slaveykov, *Săchineniya*, vol. 5, 405–408, citation on 407). The author also emphasizes the necessity of national consciousness (*narodno săznanie*) to awaken the nations and activate them.

¹⁷⁸ Petko Slaveykov, “Zdraviyat egoizăm,” *Makedoniya*, December 16, 1867 (reprinted in Petko Slaveykov, *Săchineniya*, vol. 6, 27–30, esp. 30).

¹⁷⁹ Petko Slaveykov, “Opravdanie i svestyavane,” *Makedoniya*, January 6 and 27, 1868; February 3 and 10, 1868 (reprinted in Slaveykov, *Săchineniya*, vol. 6, 46–62, esp. 52). In another place he states expressly that the Greek clergy attempted to conflate nationality with religion: Petko Slaveykov, “Niy, bălgarite, pone imame săvestta si chista,” *Makedoniya*, February 25, 1867 (reprinted in Slaveykov, *Săchineniya*, vol. 5, 355–357, esp. 355).

¹⁸⁰ Petko Slaveykov, “Bălgarite i Grătskata cherkva,” *Gayda* 2, March 1 and March 27, 1865 (reprinted in Slaveykov, *Săchineniya*, vol. 5, 194–200, esp. 200).

It is not my task here to trace all instances in which language was accorded primary importance in Bulgarian nationalism. Suffice it to point to the apotheosis of language by the greatest “national poet” (and “ideologist of the nation”) Ivan Vazov in the immediate post-liberation era. Thus elevated into a central feature distinguishing the Slavs from the Greeks, language would become a hotly contested issue with the emerging Macedonian nationalism. Bulgarian nationalism would be most intransigent in insisting that all Slavic dialects spoken in Macedonia are variants of one common Bulgarian language.

Explicitly or implicitly against Greek claims, the Bulgarian national ideologists, especially the more radical revolutionaries, characteristically insisted on “rights of nationality” (*prava na naroda, na narodnostta*) and rejected “historical rights” (though not always) and “canonical law.” For example, Georgi Rakovski championed the “right of nationality,” meaning that the peoples should restrict themselves to their “pure element,” that of their own nationality.¹⁸¹ According to Lyuben Karavelov in 1869, historical rights and canonical law lost their importance in the nineteenth century, and every people, just like every individual, must be free to live on its own and develop the heritage it receives from its forefathers. This was expressly directed against the Greek claims for Thrace and Macedonia, justified on historical grounds (as part of the Byzantine Empire), while the Bulgarian claims were based on “rights of nationality” (*narodno pravo*), meaning that these lands were then populated (mostly) by Bulgarians. Yet in the same place Karavelov argues the right of the Bulgarians to separate themselves from the Patriarchate both on historical grounds (because they had a Patriarchate in the past before falling under the Ottomans) and because canonical law was no longer valid. According to another pragmatic argument of his, the Russians, Serbs, Romanians and Montenegrins, as well as the Greeks themselves, did not ask for the Patriarch’s permission when they broke away.¹⁸² On the other hand, “evolutionist” Bulgarian national activists seem to have preferred historical arguments. However, it is not

¹⁸¹ Rakovski, “Politicheskite otnosheniya,” 12. Yet in another place Rakovski argues (the right of religious autonomy) only in terms of “historical rights” accorded to the peoples after the Ottoman conquest, whereas the Archbishopry of Ohrid is claimed as “Bulgarian.” See Georgi Rakovski, “Istoricheskoe pravo narodov v Evropeyska Turtsiya,” *Dunavski lebed*, December 20, 1860 (reprinted in Rakovski, *Săchineniya*, vol. 2, ed. Veselin Traykov [Sofia: Bălgarski pisatel, 1983], 176–181).

¹⁸² Karavelov, “Bălgarite ne tărsyat chuzhdoto.” Similarly, Lyuben Karavelov, “Kakvo ni tryabva?” *Zastava*, March 7 and 14, 1869 (reprinted in *Bălgarite i sāsēdnite*, 17–24, esp. 17, 20).

uncommon to find both kinds of arguments from the same person and even in the same text (as above).¹⁸³

For the Bulgarian national activists the “principle (or idea) of nationality” was not a demand for secession from the Ottoman Empire (as that demand could not be voiced) but for separation from the Greeks and the right to form one’s own national group within an autonomous Church. This demand was often addressed to the Ottoman authorities as an arbiter (accompanied by loyalist statements). As Petko Slaveykov explicitly stated:

“[W]e want our nationality to also be recognized, and we declare before Europe that we are a separate people from the Greeks. They do not like that this idea has developed among us and divides us from them; the Albanians will also break away from them soon.”¹⁸⁴ And again: “We do not condemn the passionate love of the Greek patriots to their kin (*rod*) and their language, and do not want to hamper their development in the least, but why do they deny us what they consider to be their pride? Why are they offended that we have embraced the principle of nationality and seek in it salvation for ourselves?”¹⁸⁵ The “Turks” would be construed as the prime enemy in the next stage of the national processes, primarily by the national revolutionaries in the free conditions of emigration.

Bulgarian and Greek national activists—each in view of the other—cited conflicting criteria as the basis of national belonging (and justification of their respective claims). Where the Greek nationalists cited religion or culture, the Bulgarian nationalists affirmed the primacy of the mother tongue. Where the Greek nationalists adduced historical rights (who was here first), the Bulgarian nationalists referred to rights of nationality (who is here now). Where the Greek nationalists (and Church leaders) spoke of canonical right, the Bulgarian nationalists pointed to precedents that invalidated it (including the Greek precedent) or to a historical Bulgarian Patriarchate, or rejected its validity in the modern era altogether. It was more complicated with history, whose resources for nation-building were indispensable for both sides.

The historical resource (“use of the past”) was of paramount importance in establishing the Bulgarian national identity, again mostly in opposition

¹⁸³ Penev, *Istoriya na novata*, vol. 4, part 1, 192–204. According to Penev, Bulgarian “enlighteners” stressed the significance of the history and language, and of the customs and folk creations for preserving nationality (*narodnost*).

¹⁸⁴ Slaveykov, “Niy, bălgarite.” Similarly Slaveykov, “Vsintsa nashi.”

¹⁸⁵ Petko Slaveykov, “Ideyata za narodnost,” *Makedoniya*, December 2, 1867 (reprinted in Slaveykov, *Săchineniya*, vol. 6, 7–11, esp. 9).

to the Greeks. The first call to the Bulgarians to become nationally conscious and proud came through a work of history, the oft-mentioned *Istoriya Slavenoblgarskaya* (History of the Slavobulgarians), explicitly written to prove that the Bulgarians had their own glorious history with kings and patriarchs and glorious military victories over the *Romios* of Byzantium (equated with Greeks). It is here that the image of the Greeks as the “hereditary enemy” emerged. By his own admission, Paisiy of Hilendar reacted to the pride exhibited by Greek (and, to a lesser extent, Serb) monks over their illustrious past and to their scorn of the Bulgarians, who “did not have history.” His history was imitated by others.

Theories of origins are of special importance in building national identities, because people take pride in an illustrious pedigree, and because descent was supposed to determine one’s ethnic (or racial) makeup. Various theories of origins (developed mostly by foreign scholars) were put forth over time by the educated Bulgarian elites, not always differentiating between the two ethnic components—proto-Bulgars and Slavs. Some theories were an attempt to appropriate the prestigious heritage of antiquity, in which Bulgarians were presented as autochthonous and thus more or less equal to the Greeks, while others presented them as migrants from Asia (as the proto-Bulgars actually were). The ancestors of the present-day Bulgarians were variously identified as Illyrians, Thracians, Scythians, Slavs, Huns, Finns, Tartars, Indians or others; no view on this issue prevailed until much later.¹⁸⁶ Irrespective of their veracity, most of these theories of origins (and thus of ethnicity) played an ideological role in the Bulgarian-Greek controversies.

Not coincidentally, the Bulgarian national elites started with attempts at the “appropriation of antiquity” in looking for European credentials and measuring up with the Greeks. One possibility was to look for forefathers among the indigenous tribes mentioned by ancient authors. The “Illyrian theory,” identifying the South Slavs with the ancient Illyrians, became especially popular. This idea appeared first in the 1601 work of the Ragusa (Dubrovnik) monk Mavro Orbini, *Il regno degli Slavi* (The Kingdom of the Slavs). It was utilized ideologically by the Croatian author Pavel (Pavao) Ritter Vitezović (1652–1713) in his *Stematografija*, who praised Slavdom

¹⁸⁶ There is a detailed study on the topic by Lilova, *Vāzrozhdenskite znacheniya*, esp. 201–279. On the various trends in positioning the Bulgarians in the world civilization in the coordinate system of the Bible and Slavia Orthodoxa, in Helleno-Roman antiquity, the Indo-European roots, and the Slavic world, see also Nikolay Aretov’s study *Bālgarskoto vāzrazhdane i Evropa* (Sofia, Kralitsa Mab, 1995), esp. 17–73.

and advocated uniting the South Slavs into a single cultural and political community. The influence of Illyrianism upon the Bulgarians was indirect, mediated by Hristofor Žefarović's *Stematografija* (1741), the Croat poet Andrija Kačić-Miošić's *Razgovor ugodni naroda slovinskog* (Pleasant Conversation of the Slavic People, 1756) and especially by Jovan Rajić's *Istorija raznih slovenskih narodov, najpače bolgar, horvatov i serbov* (History of Various Slav Peoples, Especially Bulgarians, Croats and Serbs), the Bulgarian section of which was translated by Atanas Neskovich (1801, 1811). Interestingly, the Illyrian theory did not make its way into Paisiy's history, where the Bulgarians—equated entirely with Slavs—are derived from a biblical personage (Japheth, son of Noah), and their ethnogenesis is a combination of the so-called “Sarmatian” theory (connecting Slav origins with the area around the river Volga) and the so-called “Vandal” theory (connecting the Slavs with Scandinavia). But the Illyrian theory was elaborated in the anonymous *Zograf* history, as well as in the manuscript history *Istoriya vo kratte o bolgarskom narode slovenskom* (A Short History of the Slavic Bulgarian People) of Hieromonk Spiridon of Gabrovo (1792), in the *Tsarstvenik* (Book of Kings) of Hristaki Pavlovich (1844)—a printed adaptation and update of Paisiy's history, and in Konstantin Fotinov's journal *Lyuboslovie* (1844–1846). But then it was overtaken by the Hun theory, probably under the influence of Yuriy Venelin's *Bulgarians of Old and Today* (1829) and because Illyrianism became identified as a Croatian national cause.

Weaker and more indirect attempts to appropriate ancient history were made in the 1850s by identifying the Bulgarians with the Scythians around the Volga—that is, the northern tribes mentioned by ancient authors, but unfortunately described by them as barbarians. In a tour de force in the 1850s and 1860s, the national revolutionary and man of letters Georgi Rakovski located the motherland of the Bulgarians in India, the cradle of the Indo-Europeans, thus superseding Greek antiquity in age and nobility. He asserted that the Bulgarians were “pure” Aryans, that is, Indo-Europeans, who were the first to leave Hindustan and come to Europe. Though Rakovski had a few followers (such as Yordan Hadzhikonstantinov-Dzhinot and Ivan Gologanov), the maverick idea did not take root.¹⁸⁷

A fortunate event for Bulgarian national activists was the appearance of the works of German scholar Jakob Fallmerayer in the 1830s. Fallmerayer's thesis was that the (contemporary) Greeks were not descendents of the

¹⁸⁷ Lilova, *Vǎzrozhdenskite*, 202–214.

ancient Greeks (who were wiped out), but a product of the Migration of the Peoples (*Völkerwanderung*) and of Slav colonization in particular—that they were Hellenized Slavs and Albanians.¹⁸⁸ This was a scandal for the Greeks, as it deprived them of an illustrious pedigree and a glorious past. It also had political consequences for the present: it denied the Greeks “historical rights” over territories and the claim to inherit the Ottoman Empire with the solution of the Eastern Question. It provoked a strong and lasting Greek reaction and inspired the history of Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, which, for the first time, included Byzantium as part of Greek history. Such a continuity was also argued in the introduction to *Folk Songs of Greece* by Spyridon Zambelios (1852).

Fallmerayer’s thesis (also popularized by his Russian follower Alexander Hilferding) provided the Bulgarian national activists with a strong weapon against the Greeks and a way to meet (and denigrate) their claims of superiority. The thesis was used in this way by Ivan Seliminski,¹⁸⁹ Dimităr Miladinov,¹⁹⁰ Petko Slaveykov¹⁹¹ and Grigor Părlichev,¹⁹² and it found its way into Dragan Manchov’s history textbook *Bălgarska istoriya za narodnite uchilishta* (Bulgarian History for the People’s Schools) (Plovdiv, 1874). In addition, it made it possible to blur the boundary between Bulgarians and Greeks and hybridize the two origins. But as Desislava Lilova pointed out, the symbolic capital of this was diminished by the fact that the end result still favored the Greek ethnos (“reanimated” with the Slavic gene, rejuvenated by injecting Slavic “youth”), especially with the implication of the Slavs’ easy assimilability (Hellenization). In sum, the efforts to appropriate ancient history yielded only partial and unsatisfactory results and

¹⁸⁸ Jacob Fallmerayer, *Geschichte der Halbinsel Morea während des Mittelalters*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart, 1830); vol. 2 (Tübingen, 1836); Jacob Fallmerayer, *Die Entstehung der heutigen Griechen* (Stuttgart, 1935). Part of the introduction was translated as “Povest za poluostrvo Morea,” *Bălgarska pchela* (June 14, 1863), 11–12, and (June 21, 1863), 15–16.

¹⁸⁹ Ivan Seliminski, *Biblioteka “D-r Ivan Seliminski,”* book 14 (Sofia, 1931), p. 16. Seliminski wrote in a letter to Vasil Aprilov that Fallmerayer proved the conquest and colonization of Greece by “our forefathers.” Also Seliminski, *Biblioteka*, book 3 (Sofia, 1905), 56–57. Here, in a response to the Greek newspaper *Imera*, the author calls the Greeks a “false nation,” “abstract nation” and a “mixture” of various peoples.

¹⁹⁰ Dimităr Miladinov became familiar with Fallmerayer’s theory when studying in the Greek school in Iannina. See Nadezhda Andreeva, *Nemskata literatura v Bălgariya prez Văzrazhdaneto* (Sofia: Kralitsa Mab, 2001), 330–337, esp. 337.

¹⁹¹ Petko Slaveykov, “Gărtsiya,” *Gayda*, February 15, 1866 (reprinted in Slaveykov, *Săchineniia*, vol. 4 [Sofia: Bălgarski pisatel, 1979], 201–202). According to Slaveykov, the Greeks are a mixture of various tribes, primarily Slavs.

¹⁹² Detrez, *Krivolitsi*, 145.

were hardly able to create a firm basis for a national Bulgarian identity, so they were eventually abandoned.¹⁹³

The other possibility was to look for ancestors in the tribes that migrated from Asia to Europe during the Migration of the Peoples. In fact, authoritative contemporary foreign scholars such as Johann Engel and Johann Thunmann did not consider the contemporary Bulgarians to be Slavs or “pure Slavs” (quite to the Bulgarians’ disappointment) but rather descendants of a tribe (proto-Bulgars) that settled in the Balkans in the seventh century and conquered the Slavs to create the early state (and left its Bulgarian ethnonym, though not the language). There were various such larger formations to whom the proto-Bulgars might have belonged, the best-known being the Huns of the famous Attila, but they were already monopolized by the Hungarians as their forefathers. The other tribes (including Tartars, Khazars and Alans) were even more unfortunate candidates for ancestors.¹⁹⁴ The Tartar (or Mongol) theory was actually used by some Greek authors against the Bulgarians, though most of the Greek Enlightenment authors were convinced of the Bulgarians’ Slav origins.¹⁹⁵ It was especially undesirable for the Bulgarians to have such “barbarian” forefathers, and they reacted vehemently against their “Tartarization.”¹⁹⁶ As Lilova pointed out, no theory of origins was treated as the norm in the textbooks until the liberation in 1878. Political rivals, particularly Greek and Serb nationalists, attacked Bulgarians for their unclear ethnogenesis and denied their Slav belonging, and this remained a point of weakness in the national identity.¹⁹⁷ Around the time of the Balkan Wars, the demonization of the Bulgarians reached its peak, including their

¹⁹³ Lilova, *Vázrozhdenskite znacheniya*, 218–223, 226–227.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 265–266.

¹⁹⁵ Danova, *Ivan Dobrovski*, 400.

¹⁹⁶ The Bulgarians were called Tartars, for example, by Laskaris. For a reaction, see Petko Slaveykov, “Zlobata na g-n Laskaris,” *Gayda*, May 4, 1864 (reprinted in Slaveykov, *Sáchineniya*, vol. 5, 320). The theory that the Bulgarians descend from Tartars or Finns is countered by Slaveykov with the Slav language—see Petko Slaveykov, “Bálgarite v Rumániya,” in Slaveykov, *Sáchineniya*, vol. 6 (Sofia: Bálgarski pisatel, 1980), 223–227, esp. 226 (reprinted from *Makedoniya*, February 22, 1869). Georgi Rakovski also reacted against the Tartar theory of Engel in the notes to his 1854 epic *Gorski pátnik*. See Rakovski, *Sáchineniya*, vol. 1, 340. Ivan Dobrovski also rejected Engel’s thesis of the Hun origins of the Bulgarians and was convinced that they were Slavs. See Ivan Dobrovski, *Mirozrenie*, no. 2 (October 1850), 27 (cited from Danova, *Ivan Dobrovski*, 417–418). There is also the reaction of Rashko Bláskov, *Vávedenie v vseobshita istoriya s kratko pribavlenie ot starobálgarskata istoriya* (Belgrade, 1864), 100.

¹⁹⁷ Lilova, *Vázrozhdenskite znacheniya*, 267–279.

description as cruel Tartars or Mongols (as research on Greek textbooks demonstrates).¹⁹⁸

There was also the Slav theory of origins, which had a long history of its own, such as the biblical derivation of the Slavs (with Paisiy, for whom the Bulgarians were purely Slavic or the previously mentioned Illyrian variant. The Ukrainian scholar Yuriy Venelin dissociated the Slavic theory from Illyrianism and gave it a new direction in his *Drevnie i nyneshnie bolgare* (Bulgarians of Old and Today) in 1829. In it he developed the thesis of the Bulgarians' Slav origins, not only of the conquered Slavs, but also of the proto-Bulgars, who established the state. In his rather confused logic, the invading proto-Bulgars were Huns, but the Huns were actually Slavs, including Attila, though he called himself a Hun. This idea was first taken up and propagated by the Odessa-based national activist Vasil Aprilov, who agreed with both the Slav origins and the connection with Attila the Hun, even though foreign authorities easily debunked the theory that the proto-Bulgars were Slavs. The "Slavization" of the Bulgarians in general, in the sense of emphasizing their Slav identity and often wrongly affirming entirely Slavic descent, was firmly advocated by the pro-Russian Bulgarian organizations, such as the Odessa Board of Trustees (Odesko nastoyatelstvo) and the Bulgarian Philanthropic Society (Dobrodetelna druzhina) in Bucharest, which sought to reorient the Bulgarians toward Russia in the 1840s and 1850s and worked to turn Slavic identity and sentiment into Russophilia—pro-Russian political attitudes. It was also propagated by Russian Pan-Slavs in the Russian Slav committee in Moscow (created in 1858) and St. Petersburg. Its scholarly annex was provided by the Russian historians D. Ilovayskiy and V.M. Florinskiy.¹⁹⁹ Another Bulgarian advocate of this theory in the 1850s and 1860s was Gavril Krăstevich. He was opposed by Marin Drinov, the first professional Bulgarian historian, who backed the Hun theory of the proto-Bulgars but affirmed that the Slavs had a determining influence in the ethnogenesis (as accepted to the present). The Slavic "idea" became by far the predominant one and went in tandem with Russian influence.

The Slavic "idea" (based on descent and identity) was important in another respect as well—it provided the Bulgarians with Slav "brothers" or "relatives." Unlike the Greeks, who felt ethnically isolated ("brotherless")

¹⁹⁸ Glinos, *La Grèce*. See also Danova, "Obrazăt na gärtsite," 111–112.

¹⁹⁹ Plamen Mitev, "Za 'slavyanizatsiyata' na väzrozhdenskite bălgari," *Istoriya na bălgarite: potrebnost ot nov podhod*, part 2, eds. Petko Kolev and Dimităr Dimitrov (Sofia: Tangra Tannakra, 1998), 155–172.

except for the presumed common descent with the Albanians, the Bulgarians had a wider Slavic “kin” (and identity) to fall back upon and feel solidarity with. Interestingly, the Bulgarian activists from Macedonia (Dimităr Miladinov, Rayko Zhinzifov, Yordan Hadzhikonstantinov-Dzhinot) were especially inclined toward the Slavophile (and Pan-Slav) ideas, to the point of dissolving Bulgarian identity and community into the wider Slavic identity and community. This is perhaps explained by a feeling of inferiority vis-à-vis the imposing Greek culture in Macedonia that made them seek recompense in some common Slavic identity and culture (and even common language).²⁰⁰ Bulgarian journalist Ivan Bogorov was also inspired by Slavic solidarity during his years in Vienna and Russia and for a time entertained the idea of a common Slavic language, either Church Slavonic or Russian.²⁰¹ The vast Slav community of peoples, above all Russia, obviously offered reassurance and reinforcement in the national struggles.

Apart from theories of descent, history provided Bulgarian nationalism with symbolically powerful myths. Thus the name “Slavs” was derived from *slava* (glory) in the fable that Alexander the Great fought the Slavs and was so impressed by their prowess that he bestowed on them the title of “a people glorious and invincible.” Biblical or fictitious personalities and heroes and episodes from other histories were appropriated (especially Belisarius, the military commander of Emperor Justinian I, and Justinian I himself). The supposedly Bulgarian or Slavo-Bulgarian origins of Cyril and Methodius (inventors of the Glagolitic script) were celebrated, though disputed by other Slavic peoples. Bulgarians promoted the idea of their “priority” among the Slavic peoples (first in script, first in Christianization) and the idea that Church Slavonic was “Old Bulgarian.” Finally, scanty or missing evidence of national greatness (such as books and monuments) was stereotypically blamed on their destruction by enemies.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ See Miladinov's letters in Traykov, *Bratya Miladinovi*, 19–20, 39, 73, 75–76. See also Detrez, *Krivolitsi*, 177–178; Philip Shashko, “From Mount Athos to the Shipka Pass: Slavic Consciousness Among the Bulgarian Renaissance Intelligentsia,” in *Les cultures slaves et les Balkans*, vol. 2 (Sofia, 1978), 81–99.

²⁰¹ Danova, *Ivan Dobrovski*, 442–470.

²⁰² Nikolay Aretov, *Natsionalna mitologiya i natsionalna literatura* (Sofia: Kralitsa Mab, 2006), 63–65, 76–81, 277–299; Aretov, *Bălgarskoto vāzrazhdane i Evropa*, 27–28, 60–61; Danova, *Ivan Dobrovski*, 417. See also Vera Boneva, “Vāzrozhdenski pārvoskazaniya,” *Literaturna misāl* 46, no. 2 (2000), 5–11. The inventors of the Slavic alphabet Cyril and Methodius in particular were appropriated by the Bulgarians in the second quarter of the nineteenth century and became part of their national identity, hence the claims that the Bulgarians invented the Slavic alphabet and gave it to the other Slavic peoples, and that the Holy

Historical writings again provided a negative image of the Greeks (equated once more with *Romios*). Studies of the image of the Greeks among Bulgarians show the formative influence of the early history of Paisiy of Hilendar in creating the basic traits of the negative stereotype: the Greeks as educated and polished, but haughty and arrogant, cunning, deceitful, dishonest and avaricious, in contrast with the honest and reliable, generous and hospitable Bulgarians.²⁰³ This stereotype emerged as a social reaction of simple peasants and artisans against Greeks who filled the roles of tradesmen and the educated (including high clergy). It was also a more narrow expression of tensions, rivalries and animosities between Bulgarian and Greek monks in the monastic communities of Mount Athos. The stereotype was elaborated in the periodical press since the beginning of the Church struggles in the 1840s, intensified with the new phase after 1856 and reached a peak with the Bulgarians' defiance of the Patriarch on Easter 1860. To the repertoire of negative character (moral) traits, "pseudo (*mnimo*) Greeks" was added, reflecting Fallmerayer's thesis. In a reversal of the barbarization of the Bulgarians, the Greeks were accused of barbarism (by Lyuben Karavelov) for denying the Bulgarians their rights.²⁰⁴ The Greeks were depicted negatively, as Bulgarian enemies, in all previously mentioned histories, in the plays of Dobri Voynikov and the historical dramas of Vasil Drumev, as well as in the writings of Georgi Rakovski, Lyuben Karavelov, Petko Slaveykov and others. The image of the Greeks as the "hereditary enemy" made its way into history textbooks, such as those of the teacher Dragan Manchov (in 1869, 1872 and 1874). Contemporary Greece was presented as backward and poor in the geography textbook of the well-known teacher Botyo Petkov (father of the national revolutionary and great poet Hristo Botev) *Kratka vseobshta geografiya* (Short Geography of the World, 1868).²⁰⁵

The negative stereotype of the Greeks persisted after the liberation of the Bulgarians in 1878 to reach a new peak (along with the negative image

Scriptures were first translated into Old Bulgarian and that Church Slavonic is, in fact, Old Bulgarian.

²⁰³ See Danova, "Obrazăt na gärtsite," and the studies cited there. Also Nadya Danova, "Vzaimnata predstava na bälgari i gärtsi. XV—sredata na XIX vek," in *Predstavata za "drugiya" na Balkanite*, eds. Nadya Danova, Vesela Dimova and Maria Kalitsin (Sofia: Akademichno izdatelstvo "Akad. Marin Drinov," 1995), 179–187.

²⁰⁴ About the image of the Greeks in the Bulgarian periodical press of the Revival era, see Ketī Mircheva, "Obrazăt na gärika v bälgarskiya väzrozhdenski periodichen pechat," in *Vräzki na sävmestnost*, 252–257.

²⁰⁵ Danova, "Obrazăt na gärtsite," 99–100.

of the Serbs) around the Balkan Wars.²⁰⁶ Running counter to this tendency are the works of the historian and literary scholar Ivan Shishmanov and of the historian Yordan Ivanov, the most unbiased scholars of that era. To cite Shishmanov in his work on the Hellenophile Konstantin Fotinov (in 1894): “This bilious hatred, in which we were brought up by fifty years of embittered struggles, is such that a superhuman objectivity is required to admit some facts that will allow us to be more fair to those of our activists in the mold of Fotinov.”²⁰⁷ The negative image of the Greeks also can be found in descriptions of national mentalities (or national psychology) like the ethnographic essay of Anton Strashimirov.²⁰⁸ The historiographical thesis of the “harmful influence of Byzantinism,” that is, of the Byzantine influence upon Bulgarian historical development, was sublimated into a “philosophy of (Bulgarian) history” by historian Petăr Mutafchiev in the 1930s.²⁰⁹

The Clash over Macedonia and Its Entanglements

The rivalry between Greek and Bulgarian nationalism culminated in the clash over Macedonia, an ethnically and religiously mixed region under the Ottomans with a still undecided national identity and belonging. The Bulgarian claims, based mainly on language, were confirmed by the Constantinople Conference of the Ambassadors (of the Great Powers), convened in 1876—after the harsh suppression of the 1875 uprising in Herzegovina and the April 1876 Bulgarian uprising—to discuss political reform in the Ottoman Empire (in Bosnia and in the lands with a Bulgarian majority). The European diplomats recognized the linguistic-“ethnographic” criterion of drawing boundaries (used in Heinrich Kiepert’s map) and delineated a future autonomous western Bulgarian region that

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 101–116. See also Diana Mishkova, “‘Allies-Scoundrels’: From the History of Bulgarian National Stereotypes of their Neighbors,” *Bulgarian Quarterly* 2, no. 3–4 (1992): 81–108.

²⁰⁷ Shishmanov, “Konstantin G. Fotinov,” 641. The facts mentioned by Shishmanov are, namely, that the Bulgarians owe most of their medieval culture and literature to the “Greeks” and that the Bulgarian National and Church Revival was also greatly indebted to the Greeks, even though the Bulgarians like to consider it their original deed.

²⁰⁸ Anton Strashimirov, *Bălgari, gărtsi i sārbi. Narodovedska studiia* (Sofia, 1918), esp. 44–48. The Greeks are described as sly and deceitful, conceited and arrogant and sometimes perfidiously cruel, and their claim of playing a *Kulturträger* role in the East is rejected.

²⁰⁹ Petăr Mutafchiev, “Kām filosofiyata na bălgarskata istoriya. Vizantinizmăt v sred-novekovna Bălgariya,” *Filosofski pregled* 3, no. 1 (1931), 27–36.

included most of Macedonia. To discount this map, which gave support to Bulgarian claims, the Greek activists argued that language was not applicable as a criterion of nationality in the Balkans. Education, culture, self-identification and the recognition of the Patriarchate of Constantinople were put forward as more relevant criteria. The term “Slavophone Greeks” was advanced to designate the Slav-speaking population of the disputed areas, implying that they were actually Greek. Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, who was active in the Association for the Propagation of Greek Letters, advanced the so-called “ethnocratic” (as opposed to linguistic) principle, which defined ethnic composition according to historical factors and the prevailing role of a certain ethnic group. According to him the Greeks predominated south of the Balkan range in language, intelligence, commerce and crafts.²¹⁰

In the propaganda war over Macedonia, waged with ethnographic statistics and maps, Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs used widely divergent criteria to lay claims to territories and ethnographically appropriate the region. The Bulgarian claims rested on language (claiming the Slav dialects as Bulgarian). The Greek claims were based on religious affiliation and the influence of Greek culture, but also on “historical rights” over the homeland of Alexander the Great. The Serb claims (promoted by the renowned geographer Jovan Cvijić) were variously argued, such as the Macedonians as “latent Serbs” or as a distinct ethnic group of “Macedo-Slavs.” The cartographic techniques of representation manipulated demographic distributions by various means, such as depicting territory in color codes to imply homogeneous ethnic blocks and obscure ethnic diversities and substantial minorities, not indicating population densities, and reconfiguring areas to reach the desired majority.²¹¹ The rival nationalisms thus arrived at widely varying figures and different ethnic compositions of territories in their own favor.

In the Carnegie Report (on atrocities in the Balkan Wars) the belligerents argued their claims on different grounds and based their statistics on different criteria. The official Turkish statistics used religion as the only differentiating feature, so that the group of the “Exarchists” coincided more or less with the Bulgarian nationality, but the “Patriarchists” included—in addition to Greeks—Vlachs, Bulgarians and Serbs. The Bulgarian

²¹⁰ Danova, *Natsionalniyat vāpros*, 228–229.

²¹¹ Robert Peckham, *National Histories, Natural States: Nationalism and the Politics of Place in Greece* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2001), 137–146. On the Greek criteria and claims, see also Koliopoulos and Veremis, *Greece*, 373–379.

statistics (of Vasil Kăncov in 1900, deemed most reliable by the Carnegie commission) took language and also the national consciousness into consideration. The Serb statistics were grounded in dialectology and customs as the Serb *slava*. The Greek statistics rested on the influence of Greek culture upon the urban population and the remnants of classical antiquity.²¹² There were also the statistics of Yordan Ivanov (made in 1912 at the request of the Bulgarian Exarchate), in which the population of Macedonia was classified by nationality according to mother tongue.²¹³ But these were already history, soon to be superseded by new demographic realities.

Historical arguments and competing myths were extensively used in the struggle over Macedonia. The Greeks mobilized the saga of Alexander the Great, as the ancient Macedonians were initially considered to be Greeks (Hellenes) or at least related to them. The work of M. Dimitas (a Slav or Vlach from Ohrid) *Macedonia in Speaking Stones and Surviving Monuments* cited testimonies of ancient Greek presence. The Greeks also claimed the Hellenistic polities of the *diodochoi* (successors of Alexander the Great) and the legacy of the Byzantine civilization in Macedonia and of the Greek Orthodox Church. The Bulgarian national activists also made use of historical arguments to claim Macedonia: Ohrid as the capital of Tsar Samuil (in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries); references to Emperor Basil II, the "Bulgar slayer," to nurse a desire for revenge; and the claims that brothers Cyril and Methodius from Thessaloniki, inventors of the Slavic script, were Bulgarians (or "Bulgarian Slavs"). Even Alexander the Great was claimed by some Bulgarian national activists.²¹⁴ In the eyes of the Bulgarian nationalists, the Archdiocese of Ohrid (abolished in 1767) represented a Bulgarian institution; hence the Exarchate just re-established the Bulgarian presence in Macedonia. Finally, they claimed

²¹² *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars* (Washington, DC: 1914), esp. 27–31. The Bulgarian edition is *Karnegieva anketa po voynite prez 1912 i 1913 g.* (Sofia: Abagar, 1995), 297–301.

²¹³ Yordan Ivanov, *Bălgarite v Makedoniya* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1986, reprint of the 1917 edition), 101–103. Ivanov ridicules the Greek "theory" that the Macedonian population previously belonged to the Hellenic race, but under the influence of the Bulgarian medieval state, they learned Bulgarian and became Bulgarophone Hellenes (p. 37).

²¹⁴ See the evidence of H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future* (London, 1906), 103 ("The legend that Alexander the Great was a Greek goes out by one road and the rival myth that Alexander was a Bulgarian comes in by the other.") Also V. Colocotronis, *La Macédoine et l'Hellénisme* (Paris, 1919), 525, 528–529. About a dispute in Kukush between Dimităr Miladinov and a Greek on this subject, see Arnaudov, *Bratya Miladinovi*, 84–85.

the Macedonian name—"Macedonians" as equivalent to "Bulgarians from Macedonia" to differentiate them from Bulgarians from the Bulgarian principality (as widely accepted by foreigners).²¹⁵ In turn the Serbs made historical claims on Macedonia, which was part of the empire of Serbian king Stefan Dušan before the Turkish conquest.

It is not my purpose to go into the details of the Macedonia imbroglio—the subject of so many typically partisan studies²¹⁶—but just to give a general outline.²¹⁷ For a time the struggle to win the allegiance of the very mixed population in Macedonia was conducted peacefully, using schools and the rivalry between the Bulgarian Exarchate and the increasingly nationalized Greek Patriarchate (a "second center of Hellenism"). Initially the Bulgarian national activists gained the upper hand and had considerable success in spreading Bulgarian national consciousness. After acquiring Thessaly in 1881, Greece gained a border with Macedonia, and thereafter Macedonia became its primary national objective. The same was true of Bulgaria after it achieved union with Eastern Rumelia in 1885. The two states now became directly engaged in the local struggles for national predominance in Macedonia. The Greek state spread Greek national ideology through schools and by granting stipends for people from Macedonia to study at the University of Athens. This was coordinated by the local Greek consulates and the Association for the Propagation of Greek Letters (founded in Athens in 1869), while the Patriarchate operated the schools in (less contested) Thrace, Constantinople and Asia Minor. The Bulgarian schools in Macedonia were managed and supervised by the Exarchate (in conjunction with the Bulgarian state).

The state-backed rivalry (in which Serbia also joined) soon intensified and turned violent. The pro-Bulgarian Internal Macedonian Adrianople Revolutionary Organization (better known by its acronym IMRO) was set up in 1893, and the Macedonian Supreme Committee was founded by army officers in Sofia in 1894. The Greek response was the creation of

²¹⁵ Kofos, "National Heritage," 105–113.

²¹⁶ For example, the pro-Greek Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia 1897–1913* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1966) or the pro-Bulgarian *Natsionalno-osvoboditelnoto dvizhenie na makedonskite i trakiyskite bălgari 1878–1944*, vols. 1–4 (Sofia: MNI, Institut po Istoriya pri BAN, 1994, 1995, 1997, 2003).

²¹⁷ Zelepos, *Die Ethnisierung*, 146, 151, 164–166, 196–199, 136–151, 274–275. See also Evangelos Kofos, "Dilemmas and Orientations of Greek Policy in Macedonia: 1878–1886," *Balkan Studies* 21, no. 1 (1980), 45–55. Also Basil C. Gounaris, "Reassessing Ninety Years of Greek Historiography on the Struggles for Macedonia, 1904–1908," in *Ourselves and Others*, eds. Peter Mackridg and E. Yannakakis (Oxford, 1997), 25–37.

the private organization *Ethniki Hetaireia* ("National Society") by army officers in 1894; and the ostensibly private society "Macedonian Committee" founded in Athens in 1903, actually supported by the government, with the Greek consulate in Thessaloniki as its headquarters. The struggle turned violent at the turn of the nineteenth century, with bands of irregulars "converting" the population into "Exarchists" or "Patriarchists" through terror and combat. The objective of this systematic war was to politicize the communities and divide the population according to national criteria in order to create conditions for a future annexation. The Bulgarian cause, until then ascendent, suffered a setback after the suppression of the IMRO-organized Ilinden uprising (that is, on St. Elias or St. Elijah Day) in 1903. In the "unofficial war" that followed, known as "Makedonikos Agonas" (1904–1908), the Greeks took the offensive, reinforced by a number of young army officers, and achieved considerable successes, especially in southern and central Macedonia. They often acted in cooperation with the Ottoman authorities, who strove to preserve a balance between the warring factions and thus remain masters of the situation. The Greek state gradually took control of the private irredentist organizations until all were put under direct control of the Foreign Ministry in 1908. The state thus monopolized the national question, acting more effectively than the previous romantic, heroic, but not successful strategy. The fighting was temporarily halted by the Young Turk revolution in 1908, which started in Macedonia. A brief honeymoon period of "brotherhood" ensued between the ethnic groups, followed by centralization and the hard nationalist course of the Young Turks. It was the Balkan alliance among Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro that "solved" the Macedonian question in the First Balkan War against the Ottoman Empire in 1912, followed by the Second (Inter-Allied) Balkan War of Greece and Serbia against Bulgaria over the spoils in 1913, lost by Bulgaria (which was also attacked by Romania and Turkey). The aspirations of Greece and Serbia were fulfilled, while defeated Bulgaria retained a small part of Macedonia. In the end, the Greeks successfully pushed their northern frontier deep into Slavic-speaking Macedonia during the Balkan Wars and thus realized their Hellenizing nation-building project. In this well-known story, what is important for me is how the conflict over Macedonia rebounded on the parties involved and especially Greece and Bulgaria, creating effects of "entanglement." These can only be mentioned, as it would require another work to elaborate on them.

The "northern border" of Greece, with its characteristics of a military border—that is, a place of brigandage of irregular irredentist bands and

opportunities to rob with impunity—left a deep imprint on the Greek state and the public sphere and fostered illegality. Irredentism provided the ideology to justify the plundering raids across the border and created “ideological (patriotic) bandits” in the tradition of the pre-independence *klephts*. This situation ruined and demoralized the local peasantry and cattle-breeders, undermined the legal order and the authority of the Greek state, and hampered internal reform and economic improvement.²¹⁸ This was less true of the Bulgarian state, which took the “national question” more firmly in its hands from the beginning. However, this changed with a vengeance after the wars, when IMRO was suppressed in the Greek and Serbian parts of Macedonia and transferred the base of its operations in Bulgaria (in the Macedonian Pirin region). It undermined the authority of the state, especially during the rule of the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (1919–1923), and remained a violent “irresponsible factor” afterwards that terrorized the public and political realm in Bulgaria until suppressed by the military after its coup d’état on May 19, 1934.

Another side effect of irredentism in Greece was that the ethos of “klepht-armatolism” or “pallikarism” became entrenched in public life and in the conduct of the political establishment. The terms refer to the glorified *klephts* and *armatols* of the Turkish times and their violent acts and, respectively, the brave, but undisciplined *pallikars*, that is, Greek (irregular) soldiers in the War of Independence. The “pallikarism” of public men (as defined by John Koliopoulos) meant heroic posturing, blunders in foreign policy, the tendency to blame these blunders on outside forces, and superficial adoption of Western liberal principles and institutions.²¹⁹ In Bulgaria as well, militarism with irredentist justifications and a privileged military caste entrenched itself in the state at the expense of civil society and sapped its resources, thus constricting social and economic development. It was fostered by none other than the king (Ferdinand of Saxe Coburg-Gotha) himself—a great political adventurer in the wars.

The generation of Greek officers that was active in Macedonia on a “private mission” became quite autonomous from the civil politicians and capable of taking initiative for state coups d’état (including the celebrated one in 1909 that brought Venizelos to power).²²⁰ The romantic

²¹⁸ John Koliopoulos, “Brigandage and Irredentism in Nineteenth-Century Greece,” *Nationalism and Nationality*, 67–102.

²¹⁹ Koliopoulos, “Brigandage,” 95–96. Similarly Koliopoulos and Veremis, *Greece*, 230–233.

²²⁰ Zelepos, *Die Ethnisierung*, 198–199, 254, 274.

heroic ideal of the *chetnik* (member of an armed band) exerted a similar effect in Bulgaria on politicians and military officers and even on creative personalities and prominent members of the intelligentsia (such as the great poet Peyo Yavorov, who joined a band in Macedonia). Bulgarian officers with Macedonian experience did not participate in the coup d'état against Stamboliyski in 1923, but IMRO took an active part in suppressing the Agrarians afterwards and brutally murdered Stamboliyski. It played a terrorist role in Bulgarian public and political life until 1934, obviously benefiting from the complicity (or fear) of the political establishment and based on the massive Macedonian émigré community in Bulgaria.²²¹

There was also the harsh fate of those who remained as minorities in integralist nation-states. The dreamed-of "Hellenic Ecumene" in the southern Balkans was achieved at a high price of social engineering, assimilation and the violation of the rights and sensibilities of the ethnic Others.²²² But it exacted a price from the Greeks as well. The high expectations were not fulfilled, and the contestation of the Ottoman legacy by other contenders produced a certain unease and insecurity as well as excesses in Greek nationalism. The Macedonian conflict lived on as an "internal frontier," insofar as the Greeks did not feel safe from Bulgarian and Serb claims over the Slav-speaking inhabitants of Greek Macedonia as their minorities.²²³ The Greek minority in Bulgaria—60,000–70,000 people, or less than 2 percent of the population—also suffered reprisals (especially in 1906) and came under pressure to assimilate.²²⁴ The anti-Greek acts of 1906 in some Bulgarian towns might have had economic and social causes and motivations, but they would hardly have happened without nationalist "justifications" (avenging the Greek reprisals in Macedonia).²²⁵ When integralist nationalism reigns supreme, minorities attract hostility and easily become a scapegoat for discontents and frustrations and a target of repression.

²²¹ On the influence of IMRO and the crisis of postwar nationalism, see Marin Pundeff, "Bulgarian Nationalism," in *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, 93–165, esp. 139–148.

²²² On the fate of the Bulgarian-minded population in Macedonia and Thrace, see Georgi Daskalov, *Bălgarite v Egeyska Makedoniya. Mit ili realnost. Istoriko-demografsko izsledvane, 1900–1990* (Sofia, 1996); Stayko Trifonov, *Bălgarskoto natsionalno-osvoboditelno dvizhenie v Trakiya, 1919–1934* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1988).

²²³ Koliopoulos and Veremis, *Greece*, 264–265, 278–279, 376–379.

²²⁴ *Statisticheski godishnik na bălgarskoto tsarstvo* (Godina pārva, 1909; Sofia, 1910), 39 (58,326 Greeks in 1887, 69,820 in 1905).

²²⁵ Roumen Avramov, "Anchialo, 1906: The Political Economy of an Ethnic Clash," *Etudes Balkaniques* 45, no. 4 (2009), 31–115. There is another article by Yura Konstantinova on the subject in the same issue.

In conclusion, I hope to have shown how closely interconnected and entangled Bulgarian and Greek history came to be in the modern era and how much they were conditioned by each other. The modes of connecting and entanglement varied, starting with the mediating role of Greek education in introducing Bulgarians to the modern European ideas of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution (but also the Greek mediation in urban modernity); the Greek transfers and adaptations in Bulgarian education and literature; the example of the Greek national Church; and the Greek revolutionary example. In a sense, the whole Bulgarian National Revival was modeled on that of the Greeks—from education through national self-assertion toward armed struggle. Similar influence in the reverse direction was significant, but not symmetrical, since the Greek national “revival” started earlier. Many Bulgarians fought in the Greek liberation, and some remained in Greek literary and cultural life. The links and entanglements left their traces in individual biographies of Bulgarians with a Greek education, dual identities and a role in Greek culture.

This chapter has also highlighted the impact of the timing and unevenness of the Bulgarian and Greek nation-building processes on the interaction. Of utmost importance was the igniting of Bulgarian nationalism by contact with the older Greek nationalism, which acted both positively (by example) and negatively (by provoking opposition and reaction). Some basic traits of Bulgarian nationalism were shaped in this way, such as emphasis on the mother tongue, the initially “reactive” (compensatory) character and some anti-Greek stereotypes. Greek national activists engaged with their Bulgarian opponents somewhat later, but hardly less vehemently and fatefully. Some characteristic traits of Greek nationalism (and national identity) and its evolution were shaped in the ideological clash and mutual articulation with Bulgarian ethno-linguistic nationalism during the rivalry for Macedonia and Thrace. In both cases, the strongly negative images of the Other, created under the influence of sociocultural conditions and historical events, were closely correlative and reciprocal, and constitutive of one’s own national identity. The conflict between the two rival nationalisms for territories and populations, though a negative mode of relating and “communicating,” produced entanglements with important consequences—intended and unintended—in internal politics and the subsequent history of the respective societies. Finally, the conflict has rebounded upon the respective historiographies by imposing later (mostly negative) interpretation of earlier realities; it has often obscured the shared pre-modern (pre-national) history and some positive aspects of the interaction and has downplayed the mutual indebtedness.

FORMULATING AND REFORMULATING OTTOMANISM

Alexander Vezenkov

Although the term “Ottomanism” is widely used in studies on nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Ottoman and Balkan studies, relatively little has been written about Ottomanism as a problem in its own right compared to the impressive bibliographies on different national movements and nationalisms, as well as those on Islamism and Pan-Turkism. In addition, the interpretations of the term in various studies are contradictory and mutually exclusive. Some see Ottomanism as an attempt to meld all subjects of the empire into “one single Ottoman nation,” which in most cases is condemned as an assimilationist policy.¹ Some authors opt for labels like “political,” “civic” or “non-ethnocentric” nation, and this is seen as a well-intended though not necessarily feasible project.² Finally, many scholars describe Ottomanism in milder terms, as an attempt to forge a common feeling of belonging to the Ottoman state despite religious and other differences.³

Surprisingly, all these diverging interpretations can be supported with evidence in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century texts. At that time some wrote about the melding of all peoples of the Ottoman Empire into “one single nation,” while others explained at length that there was no such goal. Those who discussed what this “Ottoman nation” was had different views, and the term “Ottoman(s)” itself was often used with

¹ Yuriy Petrosyan, “Iz istoriy propagandy doktriny osmanizma na Balkanah (po materialom bibliotek i arhivov Saraeva),” in *Tyurkologicheskiy sbornik*, 1973 (Moscow, 1975), 142–149, especially 142; Ruben Safrastyan, *Doktrina osmanizma v politicheskoy zhizni Osmanskoy imperii (50–70 g.g. XIX v.)* (Yerevan: AN ASSR, 1985); Iliya Todev, *D-r Stoyan Chomakov (1819–1893). Zhivot, delo, potomtsi*, vol. 1 (Sofia: Akademichno izdatelstvo, 2003), 186, 196 and 202.

² Fikret Adanır, “The Macedonians in the Ottoman Empire, 1878–1912,” in *The Formation of National Elites*, ed. Andreas Kappeler (Aldershot, Hants, UK: Dartmouth, 1992), 167; *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, ed. Alexander J. Motyl (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 2000), vol. 2, 388.

³ Paul Dumont, “La période des Tanzimat,” in *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman*, ed. Robert Mantran (Paris: Fayard, 1989), 497; Joseph G. Rahme, “Namık Kemal's Constitutional Ottomanism and Non-Muslims,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 10, no. 1 (1999): 24: “... the equality of all subjects (not citizens yet), Muslims and non-Muslims, and their allegiance to the house of Osman and the institution of the sultanate.”

supplementary explanations about its meaning. Official propaganda was not only inconsistent but also used intentionally vague language when addressing identity issues.

A comparison between original texts in Ottoman Turkish and their translations into the various languages spoken in the empire—particularly for bilingual editions—demonstrates that the common “Ottoman” identity was understood and expressed in a different way within different communities.⁴ Foreigners and non-Muslims in the empire persisted in translating “Muslims,” and in many cases also “Ottomans,” simply as “Turks”; the “Ottoman state” was translated as “Turkey”; and so on. But Ottoman-Turkish intellectuals also used the terms “Ottoman,” “Turk” and even “Muslim” as synonyms during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵ Even until the last days of the empire, ordinary peasants in Anatolia regarded only members of the elite as “Ottomans.” In general, studies dealing with problems of identity in the late Ottoman Empire point out the inconsistent and even contradictory use of key words in the identity discourse (such as *millet*, nation, race or the preference for the term “Ottoman” or “Turkish”) in Ottoman Turkish, even by the same person.⁶ Even at the lexicographical level the term “Ottomanism” could not be reduced to one single meaning. In his famous dictionary of the Turkish language, Şemseddin Sami defined *Osmanlılık* as “belonging to the Ottoman ‘people and race’ or as ‘being a subject of the Ottoman state’ (Osmanlı kavim ve cinsine mensubiyet veya Devlet-i Osmaniye’ye tab’iyet...). The same author could define “Ottoman” identity and “Ottomanism” in different ways, depending on the context of the discussion and his opponents’ views.⁷ In fact the identity policies of the state authorities were also an answer to specific problems or pressures and therefore changed considerably over time.

⁴ See in this regard the pioneering work of Johann Strauss “Ottomanisme et ‘ottomanité’: Le témoignage linguistique,” in *Aspects of the Political Language in Turkey (19th–20th Centuries)*, ed. Hans-Lukas Kieser (Istanbul: ISIS, 2002), 15–39.

⁵ Özgür Türesay, *Être intellectuel à la fin de l’Empire ottoman: Ebüzziya Tevfik (1849–1913) et son temps* (PhD diss., INALCO, 2008), 460–461.

⁶ Özgür Türesay, “Osmanlı Kimliğinin Peşinde: Ebüzziya Tevfik Bey,” *Müteferrika* 21, no. 1 (2002): 6–7; Bülent Bilmez, “Şemseddin Sami Frashëri (1850–1904): Contributing to the Construction of Albanian and Turkish Identities,” in *We, the People: Politics of National Peculiarity in Southeastern Europe*, ed. Diana Mishkova (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009), 353–354.

⁷ Nathalie Clayer, *Aux origines du nationalisme albanais. La naissance d’une nation majoritairement musulmane en Europe* (Paris: Karthala, 2007), 383; Türesay, *Être intellectuel*.

Another source of confusion is the parallel existence of different discourses about the future of the peoples in the Ottoman Empire during the Tanzimat era. State officials, foreigners working for the Ottoman state and leaders of the non-Muslim peoples defended profoundly different conceptions of Ottoman identity. Important changes in the perception of individual and collective identities took place during the late Ottoman Empire, even concerning state policies and the positions of Ottoman-Turkish intellectuals. As a result, early-twentieth-century definitions of "Ottomanism" fundamentally differ from those dating from the Tanzimat period (1839–1876). In summary, the variety of interpretations in present-day historiography corresponds to the very nature of Ottomanism, which was formulated by a variety of political actors as an answer to a variety of different problems.

The paradox is that even those who sincerely identified themselves as "Ottomans" felt that this term was insufficient. As the famous novelist and journalist Ahmed Midhat Efendi once stated: "I am Ottoman. And not only an Ottoman—I am the purest of Ottomans, I am a Muslim and a Turk."⁸ This anecdotal remark could help us to systematize the presentation of Ottomanism, starting with the broadest understanding of being Ottoman as a subject of the state and gradually moving toward the identity of the "purest" Ottomans, who were at the same time Muslims and Turks. But before addressing these different dimensions of Ottomanism, it is useful to examine what the place of this political concept was in relation to the other two major political tendencies in the late Ottoman Empire—Islamism and Turkism. The problem is related to the definition of both the essence and the chronological limits of Ottomanism.

Ottomanism vs. Islamism and Turkism

Traditionally the term "Ottomanism" was used to describe the identity politics in the Ottoman Empire during the reform era of the nineteenth century. According to the conventional view, "Ottomanism"—or the idea that all the subjects of the sultan must be bound in a "fraternal union"—became a matter of state policy in the Ottoman Empire during the later years of the reign of Sultan Mahmud II (1808–1839) and especially during

⁸ In response to a foreigner during his trip in Europe in 1889: Ahmed Midhat, *Avrupa'da bir cevelân* (Istanbul, 1307=1890), 97, quoted in Strauss, "Ottomanisme et 'ottomanité,'" 39.

the period of the reforms, known as the Tanzimat (1839–1876). At that time, modern political propaganda appeared in the Ottoman state, seeking to “awaken” the patriotism of all the subjects of the empire. This new policy was promoted as an alternative to the nationalisms of the non-Muslims and encouraged them to identify with and support the Ottoman state. By creating a common feeling of belonging to the Ottoman state, it had to counterbalance rising nationalisms and to preserve the empire from disintegration. It was officially stated that all subjects were and needed to be called by the same name: Ottomans.⁹

Ottomanism is often seen as the first of three different types of identity politics that dominated in succession—Ottomanism, Islamism and Turkism. This was due mainly to Yusuf Akçura’s famous article “The Three Political Systems,” published in 1904, which immediately provoked an animated debate.¹⁰ Akçura’s thesis was that there were three possible ways for the Ottoman Empire to survive politically. According to him the first was “Ottomanism,” the policy that prevailed during the Tanzimat period and sought to achieve the national unity of all the peoples inhabiting the Ottoman Empire. The second was Islamism, which became dominant under Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876–1909) and sought to create closer ties among and win the support of all Muslims, irrespective of whether they were Ottoman subjects. The third and the newest approach was Turkism, which actually corresponded to Pan-Turkism rather than to present-day Turkish nationalism. Akçura examined the advantages and the disadvantages of each of the three and defended Turkism as a viable alternative to Islamism, which dominated at that time. As for Ottomanism, it was presented as a noble but unfeasible project.

The main criticism of Akçura’s thesis was that the question was incorrectly formulated. It was not possible, wrote one of his critics, Ali Kemal, to separate the Turkic from the Islamic, the Islamic from the Turkic, the Islamic and the Turkic from the Ottoman and vice versa, “to divide the whole into three.”¹¹ Even so, Akçura’s perception prevailed, and Ottomanism, Islamism and (Pan-)Turkism are usually perceived, researched and presented as three different political projects and policies. Yet today

⁹ The problems of Ottomanism during the Tanzimat and its supranational nature are addressed in more detail in my article “Reconciliation of the Spirits and Fusion of the Interests: ‘Ottomanism’ as an Identity Politics,” in *We, the People*, 47–77.

¹⁰ Yusuf Akçura, *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset*, ed. Enver Z. Karal (Ankara: TTK, 1976).

¹¹ Ali Kemal in “Our Answer” (Cevabımız) to Akçura: “bizim için Türkü İslamdan, İslamı Türkten, Türk ve İslamı Osmanlılıktan, Osmanlılığı Türkten, İslamdan ayırmak, teklifi üçe bölmek olamaz.” In Akçura, *Üç Tarz-ı*, 37.

scholars increasingly agree that Ottomanism had a central place in the identity politics of the Ottoman Empire until its very end, although it was becoming more Islamist and was later also influenced by Turkish nationalism.¹² Attempting to unify all the subjects of the Ottoman Empire was a priority not only during but also after the Tanzimat until the end of the empire. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Young Turks took up the ideals of Ottomanism, and the developments following the 1908 revolution demonstrated how popular these ideas were also among non-Muslim and non-Turkish elites. Despite the trend toward Turkism, the Committee of Union and Progress instrumentalized Islamism on many occasions, yet they did not renounce the principles of Ottomanism.¹³

The 1876 Ottoman Constitution, which is considered the high-water mark of the Tanzimat, demonstrates that elements of "Ottomanism," "Islamism" and "Turkism" existed in official policies simultaneously. On the one hand, the text of the constitution reflects all the main ideas of the reforms up to that moment, including the basic element of "Ottomanism," namely that independently of their faith, all subjects of the empire should be called Ottomans (Article 8). Further on, the constitutional text not only deals with individuals who do, or do not, have "Ottoman nationality" (Articles 14, 65 and 68) but in many places refers to the subjects of the empire as "Ottomans" (Articles 4, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 71 and 114). At the same time the constitution stipulates that the sultan is also caliph and as such is not only the sultan of all "Ottomans," but equally the protector of Islam (Articles 3 and 4), which is the official religion of the Ottoman state (Article 11). The constitution also demands knowledge of the official language of the state as a precondition for appointment at public offices (Article 18). The fact that the language was named "Turkish" instead of "Ottoman" indicated an approach at variance with the dominant "Ottomanist" discourse. The initial draft granted the various communities the

¹² Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Second Constitutional Period of the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Eyal Ginio, "Mobilizing the Ottoman Nation during the Balkan Wars (1912–1913): Awakening from the Ottoman Dream," *War in History* 12, no. 2 (2005): 156–177, especially 159; Erol Ülker, "Contextualising 'Turkification': Nation-Building in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1908–18," *Nations and Nationalism* 2, no. 4 (2005): 613–636, especially 616 and 632.

¹³ Jacob M. Landau, *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation* (London: Hurst and Co., 1995), 46–47; Ülker, "Contextualising 'Turkification,'" 623.

freedom to use their own language in education, but this liberal stipulation was omitted from the final version.¹⁴

Ottomanism, Legal Reforms and Universal Values

Obviously it was not possible to propose an ethnocentric vision of who the “Ottomans” were and include all the subjects of the sultan; the same was true of faith and language. For that very reason, official propaganda usually avoided discussing identity-related questions and focused on a different approach. The authorities tried to gain their subjects’ support by offering (or at least promising) equal rights and fair treatment to all of them. At first glance, such arguments might look irrelevant to the idea of collective identity, but they were purposefully used by those who attempted to build it. The authorities regarded the reforms and their supposed results as a means of preventing the development of nationalist and secessionist movements.

First of all, the authorities insisted that the reforms ensured the equality of all subjects, especially between Muslims and non-Muslims, who became equal in rights (before the law, in courts, and so on) and in duties (in paying taxes). According to the Reform Edict of 1856, subjects had to have equal access to positions in the public administration and even to the army.¹⁵ The new legislation usually pointed out that access to different positions and institutions was open to “all classes of the Ottoman subjects”: this was the case for enrollment in state schools, as civil servants and even as prison guardians.¹⁶ The propaganda concerning “equal rights” was intensive and provoked nervous reactions from both sides. Non-Muslims started complaining that their newly acquired equality was not respected in practice, and they reported cases of discrimination. From the other side, it was widely claimed, by statesmen and intellectuals alike, that due to the reforms and the interventions of foreign powers, non-Muslims received more liberties than Muslims. Later on, some even

¹⁴ Ali Gencer, “İlk Osmanlı Anayasasında Türkçenin Resmi Dil Olarak Kabulü Edilmesi,” in *Armağan. Kanun-u Esasi’nin 100. Yılı* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi, 1978), 183–189.

¹⁵ Carter Findley, “The Acid Test of Ottomanism: The Acceptance of Non-Muslims in the Late Ottoman Bureaucracy,” in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, vol. 1, eds. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York and London: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1982), 339–368.

¹⁶ *Düstur*, Tertib-i evvel, vol. 2 (Konstantiniye [Istanbul], 1290=1873/4), 187; *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 1293=1876/7, 220–222.

argued that concessions to non-Muslims helped cause the decline of the empire.¹⁷ These reciprocal accusations of discrimination—against non-Muslims and Muslims respectively—reappear in similar ways in present-day Balkan and Turkish historiographies.

The most problematic dimension of equality was related to military service. Despite the intention of the 1856 Reform Edict, non-Muslims (with some minor exceptions) were not accepted into the army before 1909, and even after this date only a small fraction of them were recruited.¹⁸ Yet in theory all male subjects contributed equally to the security of the Sublime State, only in different ways—some by serving under arms, others by paying the military tax. Once again some non-Muslims complained that being excluded from military service was discrimination, while Muslims rightly pointed out that paying a tax was not the same as the sacrifice of enlisting and putting one's life at risk.¹⁹ Another possibility for non-Muslims to help defend the state was donations to the Ottoman army, regularly reported in the official press. But in practice the army, a major instrument for indoctrination in modern societies, was not sufficiently used to foster a feeling of solidarity between soldiers of different faiths and national affiliations. The attempt to rely on Christian soldiers after 1909—more precisely, during the Balkan Wars—was a failure.²⁰

Besides legal equality, official propaganda highlighted the tolerance of the Ottoman state towards the non-Muslims, contrasting it with the mistreatment of Muslims in Greece, Russia and elsewhere. Articles in the press reported examples of the Ottoman authorities' fair treatment of—and even compassion toward—the Greeks. At the same time, cases were reported of the mistreatment of Muslims/Turks by the Greeks. Discrimination against the Jews in Eastern European countries (mostly in Romania and Russia) was a favored topic for the newspapers, providing an opportunity to highlight the tolerance in the Ottoman Empire.

In writings about equality and tolerance towards non-Muslims, it was often stated that all the sultan's subjects were living "like brothers" (*kardeşçe*). Symptomatic of this brotherhood were the donations, regularly

¹⁷ Midhat Pacha, *La Turquie. Son passé, son avenir* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1878), 13–14; Mohamed Farid Bey, *Etude sur la crise ottomane actuelle 1911–1912—1914–1915* (n.p. [Geneva]: Nouvelle édition, 1915), 5 ff.; İlhan Yerlikaya, *XIX. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Siyasi Hayatında Basiret Gazetesi* (Van: Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi, 1994), 104–106; Rahme, "Namık Kemal's," 28–29.

¹⁸ Eric J. Zürcher, "Ottoman Conscription System, 1844–1914," *International Review of Social History* 43 (1998): 437–449.

¹⁹ Rahme, "Namık Kemal's," 36.

²⁰ Ginio, "Mobilizing the Ottoman Nation," 174.

reported in the press, testifying to the compassion of Christians for Muslim refugees (from places such as Crimea, Crete and Serbia). The idealized picture of the Ottoman past, when people of different faiths lived “for centuries under the same roof without any problem,” reflects the propaganda introduced during the Tanzimat.

One topic frequently recurring in official discourse was justice (*adalet*), which was presented as characteristic of Islam and also of the Ottoman state. It was claimed that the successes of the first sultans were due to the fair treatment they had shown toward everyone.²¹ Still, justice was presented not only as a traditional value but also as something restored by the reforms. Numerous articles insisted that Ottoman legislation was constantly improving and called on subjects to respect the law. The new laws and regulations were usually published in the official and semi-official press and occasionally in other newspapers. In some cases, the legal text was preceded by an introduction emphasizing the improvement brought by the respective law, assuring better and equal treatment of the subjects. Thus justice appeared as a *raison d'être* for the Ottoman state and at the same time as a reason for its subjects to remain loyal to the empire.

In addition to portraying the Ottoman state as providing equal and fair treatment to all its subjects (and to a great extent, to foreigners), official propaganda praised the administration as securing peace and order. Reports of crimes appeared regularly in official newspapers, but they were always accompanied by the information that the criminal had already been captured and brought to justice, or at least that the local authorities were pursuing the perpetrator and it was only a question of time before he was caught. In some cases, the information quoted the article of the Penal Code under which the criminal had been sentenced, thus demonstrating that law was respected. Cases of Christian peasants who had emigrated but wanted to move back to the empire also received press coverage, thus underlying the full protection provided by the sultan and his government. At the same time, the authorities constantly tried to discredit the armed groups organized by various national movements as mere criminals and troublemakers who endangered the peaceful lives of those from their own (religious/national) community.

Official propaganda insisted that the Ottoman state provided its subjects not only security but also comfort and prosperity (*rahat ve refah*). The stability of the Ottoman state and the prosperity of the people were presented

²¹ Midhat-Pacha, *La Turquie*, 7–8.

as closely interrelated, and this was made very clear in the Imperial Edict of 1839 (the Hatt-i Şerif of Gülhane). According to official propaganda, the minority (non-Muslim and non-Turkish) peoples of the empire could achieve prosperity only within the Ottoman state, and only if the state itself prospered. According to this view, small national states were unviable and dependent on other foreign countries and interests.²² Articles in official newspapers insisted that the unity of all peoples was needed to achieve economic and cultural prosperity. In such a way, the developmentalist discourse was combined with the idea of a fraternal union among the different peoples and the call for serving the fatherland.

The peak of the reform ambitions was the introduction of a constitutional regime, which was seen as a solution to all major political problems, including the consolidation of all subjects. The 1908 revolution demonstrated to what extent the hopes not only for political reform of the empire, but also for improving the fate of the different national communities, were turned toward the constitution as an almost magical solution.

It might be justified to ask to what extent writings about legal issues and equality between subjects were part of an identity project. A good illustration of the existence of such an agenda might be an 1847 pamphlet published in Constantinople. According to a note on its front page, it was compiled from excerpts from *Journal de Constantinople* and *Echo d'Orient*—the semi-official newspapers published in French in the Ottoman capital. The title and the subtitle were eloquent enough: *De l'unité nationale dans l'Empire Ottoman. Par la législation, l'administration, le territoire, la tolérance, l'éducation et la presse*. The pamphlet presented the new political concepts introduced with the reforms: universality of law, territorial unity of the state and uniform administration, religious tolerance, a secular educational system for all subjects, and the development of book printing and the press. Here was a whole program, starting with its embodiment in the new legislation and finishing with its propagation in newspapers (the pamphlet itself being one of its products), which envisaged the achievement of “the national unity of the Ottoman Empire.” Although the authorities never used such clear formulas about “national” unity, they also saw the reforms as a means for political consolidation.

²² Butrus Abu-Manneh, “The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism: The Ideas of Butrus al-Bustani,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 11 (1980), 298; *Tuna/Dunav*, no. 435, December 14, 1869.

The universal values promoted by the Ottoman authorities during the Tanzimat were well-accepted. Even non-Turkish nationalists had no objections to them—the ideas of equality, justice, education and prosperity were shared dreams, even if there were many disappointments concerning their realization. In fact one could detect some influence of Ottoman propaganda in the national “doctrines” forged within the Ottoman space, particularly the presence of “Ottomanist” rhetoric in the Bulgarian, Macedonian and Albanian national discourses, such as insistence on equality, justice and tolerance and different nations and faiths living like brothers. Obviously catchwords like “brotherhood,” “equality” and “justice” appeared in many contexts, including various national movements. However, in many cases almost identical phrases appear in the “Ottomanist” and the national discourses, the former most likely serving as a source for the latter. For example, in the Bulgarian case, appeals for “the consent, the brotherhood and the perfect equality between Bulgarians, Turks, Jews, etc.” who “will be equal in rights [...] under one universal law,” as well as those for “brotherhood with everyone” regardless of “faith and nationality,” correspond word-for-word to expressions in Turkish in official editions.²³ The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) also adopted a supra-national ideology and all the rhetoric about “tolerance” and “equal treatment” before the law, “fraternal cohabitation” of the different peoples (once again “regardless of nationality”) united by “common interests” and rejecting “foreign interests” and interventions.²⁴ The concept “regardless of religion and sect” happened to serve well in the Albanian case, where national unity had to be built across confessional lines. Surprisingly, at first glance, such parallels show that the political adversaries of the Ottoman Empire adopted what they found acceptable in its official propaganda.

Ottoman Patriotism

Even if the writings about equality and justice were well-accepted, they were not sufficient to provoke active support for the Ottoman Empire. A central part of the new policy involved fostering a sense of loyalty toward the state and the sultan, as well as drawing attention to common enemies.

²³ In more detail: Vezenkov, “Reconciliation of the Spirits,” 71–72.

²⁴ Tchavdar Marinov, “We, the Macedonians: The Paths of Macedonian Supra-Nationalism (1878–1912),” in *We, the People*, 128–129.

According to official propaganda, the subjects of different faiths were not only “equal”—they were “the children of the same father” and of “the same fatherland.”

Just like other nineteenth-century autocrats, the Ottoman sultans tried “to forge a direct link with their people.”²⁵ During the Tanzimat period this link was very important and was almost synonymous with loyalty toward the Ottoman state. It was only at later stages and especially after the 1908 revolution that patriotism without the sultan became conceivable. Still, during the Tanzimat, official propaganda relied heavily on the traditional feelings of loyalty toward the sultan: at that time his portrait began to be displayed in public places,²⁶ and newspaper editorials and book prefaces presented him as the guardian and initiator of everything positive in the empire. His voyages throughout the country and donations for mosques, schools and other initiatives were also designed to boost his popularity. Non-Muslim publications dating from the Tanzimat period regularly paid tribute to the reigning sultan. This was not just lip service—notes and chronicles written for private use also eulogize the sultan and the members of his family.²⁷

At the same time the authorities strove to promote a new feeling—patriotism toward the Ottoman state, irrespective of religious or any other affiliation.²⁸ The word *vatan* in Turkish (and its equivalent in other local languages), alongside its original meaning of “native place,” began to acquire the new sense of “fatherland” (closer to the meaning of *Vaterland* in German). This process took place only gradually, and in the 1850s and 1860s only a few people used the word in this new way.²⁹ The changing meaning of the word *vatan* and the portrayal of the whole empire as a “native place” was related to the idea that the territory of the state was indivisible. The unity and indivisibility of the Ottoman state were proclaimed in the first article of the 1876 Constitution, which was also a

²⁵ Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 17.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

²⁷ *Pisahme da se znae. Pripiski i letopisi*, eds. Ventseslav Nachev and Nikola Fermandzhiev (Sofia: OF, 1984), especially 161, 180, 190, 294 and 351.

²⁸ Petrosyan, “Iz istorii propagandy,” 144; article on patriotism in *Sarajevski cvjetnik*, July 25, 1875.

²⁹ Tobias Heinzelmann, “Die Konstruktion eines osmanischen Patriotismus und die Entwicklung des Begriffs *vatan* in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts,” in *Aspects of the Political Language in Turkey*, 41–51. The word “*vatan/otechestvo*” continued to be used with its old meaning of “native place” even in official editions: *Tuna/Dunav*, no. 550, February 10, 1871.

response to the immediate threat of losing some territories in the Balkans and the Caucasus.

Patriotism had to become the main argument for serving in the army. Although religious fervor remained decisive for motivating an almost exclusively Muslim army, patriotic discourse was forged as well. Already during the late Tanzimat period, high-ranking military commanders called upon their soldiers to serve and protect “the monarch, the state, the fatherland and the people” (*melik ve devlet ve vatan ve millet*) instead of referring to Islam, Allah or Holy War.³⁰ In the First Balkan War the Ottoman army fought in the name of all “Ottomans” and the common fatherland, carefully limiting the usage of Islamic symbols, in contrast to the unrestricted propaganda in religious terms in the four Balkan Christian states on the opposite side.³¹

The concept of the “fatherland” appeared earlier and was much more successful than the idea of bestowing a common denomination on all subjects. Although the non-Muslims never really started to perceive themselves as “Ottomans,” as the 1876 Constitution postulated (Article 8), during the Tanzimat period they began to refer to the Ottoman state as the “fatherland.” Most calls to serve the “fatherland” were rather abstract, but on many occasions they explicitly referred to the empire as a whole. For example, Bulgarian newspapers of that time carried expressions like “our common fatherland—the Ottoman tsardom”³² or “common and dear fatherland.”³³ Patriotism did not always mean loyalty to the Ottoman state—the leaders of the national movements also called themselves “patriots.” “Patriots” from both sides accused each other of professing “false” patriotism, thus proving that this important concept was understood in two completely opposite ways. Ottoman patriotism was also actively propagandized during the following decades, and in the initial months after the 1908 revolution, even non-Muslim leaders seemed enthusiastic about the “common fatherland.”

The self-identification of the subjects with the Ottoman state was largely encouraged by contrasting them with foreigners. The Law of Ottoman Citizenship or, if translated literally, of “subjectship” (1869),³⁴ was above all an attempt to prevent the subjects of the sultan from opting for *foreign* citizenship. The law itself was not concerned with the unity of Muslims

³⁰ *Tuna/Dunav*, no. 387, June 22, 1869.

³¹ Ginio, “Mobilizing the Ottoman Nation,” 167.

³² *Tsarigradski vestnik*, no. 68, January 1, 1852.

³³ *Makedoniya* 4, no. 1 (November 15, 1869).

³⁴ *Düstur* (1289=1872/3), vol. 1, 16–18.

and non-Muslims; it did not insist on equality, as some studies claimed,³⁵ but sought to draw a clear line between Ottoman and foreign subjects. Even for the non-Muslims, who did not accept the self-identification of "Ottomans," the status of "Ottoman subject" gradually became important for practical reasons (taxation, property rights).

The same opposition to foreigners is visible in economic publications. Protectionism of local production became a state policy in the 1860s. At the same time, the Ottoman press began to call for the use of local products instead of imported ones. In these texts local products were praised regardless of the faith of their producers. In general, the developmentalist discourse, much like the feelings against the foreign powers and their interventions, provided a good basis for pleading for the unity of the Ottoman peoples.

Although Ottomanism competed with the various internal nationalisms, foreign "intrigues" were considered the main threat to the Ottoman state. The official point of view was that the nationalist movements were instigated from outside; they were regarded as mere tools in the hands of foreign states. The attitude was similar toward foreign missionaries; therefore the authorities clearly preferred that non-Muslims keep their traditional faiths rather than convert to "foreign creeds."³⁶

Generally the critiques against foreign powers and interventions were also well-received by the Christian elites, who showed genuine suspicion of the "demoralizing" effects of European influence; opposition to "foreign" interests and interventions became part of a broad-based consensus. But at the same time this feeling nurtured a reaction against the entire set of legal and political reforms, which were discredited as something imposed from outside. That internal contradiction was one of the largest in the Ottomanist project that started to disturb Muslim-Turkish intellectual elites, starting with the Young Ottomans in the 1860s.

Ottomanism as Imperial Supranationalism

Although some studies say that the Ottoman identity was intended to replace the identification with the existing *millets*,³⁷ hardly anyone from

³⁵ Safrastyan, *Doktrina osmanizma*, 60–61.

³⁶ Deringil (*The Well-Protected*, 29) quotes to this effect an imperial order of 1897.

³⁷ For example, David Kushner, *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism, 1876–1908* (London: Frank Cass, 1977) 3: "... 'Ottoman nation' which would replace the old, narrow loyalty to the community..."; Heidemarie Doganalp-Votzi, "The State and Its Subjects according to

within the Ottoman space really believed that differences between peoples would disappear once the Ottoman identity was consolidated. In fact, the idea of melding all existing peoples into one single nation appeared in the Ottoman press, but it was usually suggested by foreigners. This was the case with the much-circulated proposal published in *La Turquie* that the name of the state and of all its subjects should be changed to the "Oriental Empire" and "Orientals," respectively.³⁸ The newspaper's editor-in-chief at that time was Charles Mismar, a French adventurer and *turcophile* who was fascinated by the model of the United States.³⁹ He later wrote that as an editor-in-chief he enjoyed considerable liberty and called his own writings "*mes extravagances*."⁴⁰ The author of a short article in *Courrier d'Orient*, reproduced in *Makedoniya* (1866–1872, edited by Petko Slaveikov), was aware of the possible confusion. In order to avoid any misunderstanding, the article stressed that "the fusion" meant only "the fusion of the interests of the different peoples," and that the fusion of the peoples themselves could happen only by a divine miracle.⁴¹

Some formulations regarding the unification of the "Ottoman peoples" could be confusing, at least in the form in which they appeared in translated texts. In a 1878 pamphlet published in French, Midhat Paşa, the initiator of various reforms at the local level and of the 1876 Constitution, wrote of "the fusion of the different races."⁴² But for Midhat Paşa, "la fusion entre les diverses races" meant the achievement of political unity through the establishment of a constitutional regime, the creation of a "common fatherland," not melding in a single nation—a term he did not use. On the contrary, Midhat Paşa continued to see Muslims and non-Muslims (and probably to a large extent "les diverses races") as distinct units, participating in a larger union. Whenever Midhat initiated mixed structures, Muslims and non-Muslims had separate representation with

the 1876 Ottoman Constitution: Some Lexicographic Aspects," in *Aspects of the Political Language in Turkey*, 61: "... the idea of the creation of an 'Ottoman nation' in which all the different ethnic and confessional population groups should find a common identity and into which they should dissolve." See also note 1.

³⁸ Also published in *Makedoniya* 2, no. 25 (May 18, 1868); later severely criticized in *Narodnost/Nationalitate*, no. 14 (February 23, 1869).

³⁹ François Georgeon, "Un journaliste français en Turquie à l'époque des Tanzimats: Charles Mismar," in *Presse turque et presse de Turquie*, eds. Nathalie Clayer, Alexandre Popovic and Thierry Zarcone (Istanbul and Paris: ISIS, 1992), 93–121.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴¹ *Makedoniya* 3, no. 11 (February 8, 1869); the same in an article reproduced in *Makedoniya* 1, no. 9 (January 28, 1867), from *Gazette du Levant*.

⁴² Midhat Pacha, *La Turquie*, 14 and 29.

quotas—in the local councils as well as in the mixed courts. According to his constitutional project, they also had to have quotas for the representation in the Chamber. A very similar message is to be found in the article by Namık Kemal, “İmtizacı akvam”—the title could be translated as “fusion” but also as “the harmonizing of the populations/tribes/nations.” The advocated “fusion of the various populations of the empire” is to be understood as some kind of political unity, insofar as it had to be achieved through the introduction of a constitution and a new educational system.⁴³

The Tanzimat leaders envisaged no practical steps for fusion of the diverse religious and linguistic groups into one “nation.” First of all, they regarded the unity of all Ottoman subjects as easily achievable through political decisions—reform edicts of the sultan or the Constitution of 1876. Some of them proposed that Muslims and non-Muslims study together in mixed schools and serve together in the army. A project for mixed schools, launched by Tanzimat leaders in the late 1860s, was not put into practice, and education was not widely used as a tool to promote Ottoman unity. Still, the few mixed schools created at that time give us an idea of what the authorities intended. One such example is the so-called *islahhanes*—reformatory schools for orphans or delinquent children. In such schools in the Danube Province, there were Bulgarian and Turkish teachers and separate religious lessons for Muslims and non-Muslims.⁴⁴ The purpose was to educate the children together in order to make them all “good Ottoman subjects,” not to convert them into “Muslims” and “Turks.” In the end some of them had to become “good Muslims,” the others “good Christians.”

At the same time the projected Ottoman identity did not correspond to the notion of a “civic” or “political nation.” It was not “the nation” or “the people” but the state and the monarch that were the linking elements in Tanzimat Ottomanism. The various peoples were “living like brothers,” they were “children of the same father” (that is, the sultan) and of the “same fatherland,” but they were not one single people. Those who adopted the modern idea of a nation were clearly inclined towards Turkish nationalism in the “ethnic” sense, not to a “political” or “civic” nation

⁴³ Rahme, “Namık Kemal’s,” 34: *İbret*, no. 14, June 20, 1872.

⁴⁴ Hans-Jürgen Kornrumpf, “Islahhaneler,” in *Economie et sociétés dans l’Empire ottoman (fin du XVIII^e–début du XX^e siècle)*, eds. Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont and Paul Dumont (Paris: CNRS, 1983), 149–156; Teodora Bakārdzhieva, “Rusenskoto islahhane—chast ot obrazovatel’nata reforma v Osmanskata imperiya,” in *Studia Balcanica* 23 (Sofia: Akademichno izdatelstvo, 2001), 325–338.

of all peoples living in the Ottoman Empire. The few who were concerned in the 1870s with the Turkish element of the Ottoman state, like Süleyman Paşa and Ahmed Vefik Paşa, would later be praised as precursors of Turkism.

Non-Muslims who were willing to call themselves "Ottomans" in the sense of belonging to an Ottoman nation (such as the journalist and writer Teodor Kasap) remained anecdotal exceptions. Even those who used that term as self-identification did not renounce their national affiliation. A good example is the open letter sent by the journalist Nikola Rizov in January 1909 to the head of the Parliament, Ahmed Riza. Rizov talked about "Ottomans" in the first person, he called Ahmed Riza his "compatriot" and insisted that they both had the same fatherland, but at the end he signed the letter as *Bulgare de Monastir*. Rizov strongly opposed "narrow Ottoman nationalism" and the idea of a centralized state, as well as the use of only one language. Indeed, he advocated decentralization and representation of all nationalities in the imperial government.⁴⁵

It is also revealing that those who discussed the problem of the "union of all peoples in the Ottoman Empire" used two different terms to refer to the wider Ottoman union and its components. For example, Ebüzziya Tevfik insisted that there was not and could not be any "Ottoman millet," because different *millets* and *kavims* formed one single Ottoman *ümme*t (that is, *umma'*, the word that otherwise means "the universal Muslim community").⁴⁶ Different terms were used in this case by the Syrian political and intellectual leader Butrus al-Bustani, who wrote about the Ottoman *umma'*, composed of many "racial" groups (*ajnas*) that had "common interests."⁴⁷ By the end of the Ottoman period, Albanians saw their *kavim/komb* (nation) as part of the Ottoman *millet*.⁴⁸ On the one hand, one can see the confusion concerning the usage of the terms: in one case different *kavims* form one *millet*, and in the other different *millets* form one *ümme*t. On the other hand, the very use of the two different terms shows clearly that the Ottoman community (the Ottoman *millet* or Ottoman *umma'*/*ümme*t) and the peoples that were part of it (*kavims*, *millets*, *ajnas*) were different. Expressions such as "the Ottoman *millet*" or "the Ottoman

⁴⁵ Nikola Rizoff, *La renaissance de la Turquie. Comment peut-elle se faire? Lettre ouverte à Ahmed Riza à Constantinople* (Salonika, 1909).

⁴⁶ In his 1891 dictionary: Strauss, "Ottomanisme et 'ottomanité,'" 1999, 24; Türesay, *Être intellectuel*, 459.

⁴⁷ Abu-Manneh, "The Christians between Ottomanism," 298.

⁴⁸ Clayer, *Aux origines*, 649–650.

people” were occasionally used to refer to the subjects of the sultan, but the singular form in this case was used without the implied meaning of an indivisible body, nor did it exclude the existence of different peoples in the empire. The often-used expression “living like brothers” also implied that there were different peoples, not a single one.

One of the main characteristics of the idea of Ottoman unity is that it envisaged a dual loyalty—to the state and to one of the (religious) communities. Regulations for the non-Muslim *millet*s (the so-called *constitutions*) required from the spiritual leaders of the non-Muslims loyalty both to their respective *millet* and to the Ottoman state: the members of the spiritual councils to the Orthodox Church had to be “faithful to and love their state and their *millet*” (*devlete ve millette sadık ve muhib*). Similar regulations were envisaged for the spiritual leader of the Jewish community, the Hahambashi (*devletçe ve milletçe şayan-i emniyet ve itimad bulunan*).⁴⁹ Editorials in the Bulgarian newspapers published in Istanbul insisted that they would simultaneously serve the interest of the Bulgarian people (in some cases the Bulgarian Church was also mentioned) and of the state and/or the sultan. They argued that these interests coincided, that the stability and the prosperity of the Ottoman state was in the best interest of the Bulgarian people. Contemporary scholars trying to prove that the leading *turcophiles* among the Bulgarians were in fact true Bulgarian patriots easily find evidence to support this thesis.⁵⁰ In a similar way Albanian nationalists believed that preserving the Ottoman Empire was the only way to avoid the dismemberment of the Albanian lands by neighboring states.⁵¹ In turn, Ottoman authorities tried to instrumentalize Bulgarian and especially Albanian nationalism against Greek and Serbian/Montenegrin ambitions and/or interventions.

It should be added that anti-Greek or anti-Serbian tendencies corresponded simultaneously to Ottoman foreign policy and to the interests of the national movements of some of the peoples living within the empire like the Bulgarians and the Albanians (to mention only cases in the Balkans). Tanzimat propaganda for Ottoman patriotism and unity tried to incorporate and appease nationalisms, not to oppose them openly. Bulgarian and Albanian nationalism were largely compatible with “Ottomanism” and vice versa. “The fusion of the interests”—one of the widely used

⁴⁹ *Düstur* (1290=1873/4), vol. 2, 962 and 969.

⁵⁰ In more detail: Vezenkov, “Reconciliation of the Spirits,” 67–68.

⁵¹ Clay, *Aux origines*, 691.

clichés of Ottoman propaganda at that time—was not necessarily an empty phrase.

Ottomanism could be acceptable even for peoples who had their own national state outside, and compact communities within, the Ottoman Empire. In the Greek case, “Helleno-Ottomanism” regarded the Ottoman Empire as an advantageous milieu for the further rise of the Greek community.⁵² The so-called *turcophiles* among the Christians saw Ottoman unity as a supranational union, as a compromise serving their own nation or community. It is questionable whether the vast majority of them were convinced and conscious advocates of Ottomanism in a long-term perspective. But even if Ottomanism was politically “stillborn,”⁵³ even if it was a “complete failure in the European provinces”⁵⁴ in the long run, it served various political and national projects for decades. Of course every one of these projects tried to influence the Ottomanist agenda to its own advantage.

In a larger comparative perspective, the Ottomanism of the Tanzimat period could be compared with the identity politics in the Habsburg or Russian empires at that time, instead of trying to classify it with “civic” or “political nationalism” in Western Europe or North America. In these multinational empires the authorities accepted the existence of different groups with their own identity, elite, traditions and national aspirations. The aim was to achieve a certain cohesion of all subjects without trying to meld the different groups into “one nation.” All these cases involved the dominant position of one community (and even two in the Habsburg Empire, especially after 1867). At the same time the central power was ready to make concessions to other religious, linguistic or national communities in order to appease and attract them. Therefore a term like “imperial supranationalism” would be more helpful to describe the Ottomanist policy during the Tanzimat period.⁵⁵ In fact a loose supranationalism was the only way to create a certain kind of Ottoman unity, but in the end, it was not strong enough.

⁵² Evangelos Kechriotis, “Ellinothomanismos,” 2008, in *Encyclopaedia of the Hellenic World*, Constantinople: <http://www.ehw.gr/l.aspx?id=11012>.

⁵³ İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğunun en uzun yüzyılı*, 4th ed. (Istanbul: İletişim, 1999), 154.

⁵⁴ *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, vol. 2, 388.

⁵⁵ Carter Findley, “The Advent of Ideology in the Islamic Middle East (Part I),” *Studia Islamica* 55 (1982): 143–169.

The Purest Ottomans

Official propaganda during the Tanzimat era was based on universal values like equality, justice and tolerance, as well as on the allegiance to the Ottoman state and sultan. But when the promoters of “Ottomanism” had to answer the question of who they were, the answer was “Muslim” and later increasingly “Muslim and Turk.” Non-Muslims who accepted the idea of preserving and even strengthening the Ottoman Empire identified themselves as Greeks, Bulgarians, Armenians, Jews and so on.

The supranational character of official Ottoman patriotism left space for the development not only of non-Muslim nationalisms but also of a more “identity-oriented” Ottomanism. Ahmed Midhat Efendi’s comment that he was not only an Ottoman but the “purest” of Ottomans was not an off-the-cuff remark—during the same year, 1897, he published an article in which he compared “Ottomanism” to the other nations and highlighted the differences. Ahmed Midhat described *Osmanlılık* as a rather complicated structure, and finally he presented identification with the Ottoman Empire at two levels—with the state and the dynasty for all subjects, and additionally, with Islam and Turkishness for those who were Muslims and Turks.⁵⁶ Although not as popular as the clear definition given a few years later by Akçura (Ottomanism as an attempt to create “one single nation”), this one reflected much more realistically the perception of being Ottoman at two levels—narrower for the “purest Ottomans” and broader for all subjects. A few months after the 1908 revolution, these two interpretations of “Ottomanism”—as an attachment to the state and a union of different peoples versus an identification with Islam and Turkishness—clashed.

Moreover, Ottomanism had its inner hierarchy and priorities. It was claimed that “all without exception are Ottomans,” but at the same time it was said that only some of them could take pride in being the “purest Ottomans” (Ahmed Midhat). In “the union of the elements” (*ittihad-i anasır*) there was one “ruling nation” (*millet-i hâkime*)⁵⁷ or “fundamental element” (*unsur-i asli*)—“the Turks and the Anatolian peoples.”⁵⁸ They also perceived themselves as “descendants of the conquerors” (*evlad-i fatihan*)—an origin that non-Muslim and non-Turks were not able, or allowed, to

⁵⁶ Kushner, *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism*, 40. The article is “Osmanlılığımızın başka Milliyetlere Adem-i Müşahabeti” in *Tercüman-i Hakikat*; no. 5881, September 13, 1897.

⁵⁷ Fuat Dündar, *İttihat ve Terakki’nin Müslümanları İskan Politikası (1913–1918)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), 33; Türesay, *Être intellectuel*, 482, 484.

⁵⁸ Deringil, *The Well-Protected*, 59 (quoting an 1885 report by Osman Nuri Pasa).

claim. Equality was acceptable only to the extent that it did not hurt the interests of the Muslim/Turkish element: in the Lyceum of Galatasaray, “children from all classes of the Ottoman Empire” were accepted, but “at least half of them” had to be Muslim.⁵⁹

It is not a coincidence that the two characteristics of the “purest” Ottomans—Muslim and Turkish background—corresponded to the two other major political trends in the late Ottoman Empire—Islamism and Turkism. Therefore we need to examine their presence in Ottomanism but also to take into account the changing perceptions of collective identity. In the early twentieth century, in the debate with nascent Turkish nationalism, the advocates of “Ottomanism” gradually adopted the way of thinking and the vocabulary of the nationalists.

Ottomanism and Islam

Religion in general and Islam in particular had a very important role in nineteenth-century Ottoman state and society. Despite all political and legal reforms during the Tanzimat period, religion remained the main identity marker. Though the political and intellectual leaders of the Tanzimat may not have been preoccupied with the nation and ethnicity, they were concerned about religion. In legal and political texts the differences among the subjects were classified in one category, although expressed with two words “religion and sect” (*din ve mezheb*). This is crucial for understanding how Muslim-Turkish statesmen, state officials, intellectuals and journalists of the Tanzimat period perceived individual and collective identity: for them religious division was basic. Ottoman legislation of the nineteenth century constantly referred to “Muslims/non-Muslims”; population statistics always presented population figures subdivided into the same two categories, “Muslims and non-Muslims” (though sometimes a more detailed picture was given, with Jews, Armenians and other specific communities counted individually). Official texts only rarely mentioned that subjects differed not only in faith, but also in language and nationality: examples of this are to be found at one place in the 1856 Reform Edict and, surprisingly, in the opening speech of Abdulhamid II to the first Ottoman parliament. Differences in nationality were not mentioned

⁵⁹ “Règlement Organique de Lycée Impérial,” Article 5, in G. Aristarchi, *Législation ottomane*, vol. 3 (Istanbul, 1874), 317.

in the 1876 Constitution nor in the response of Parliament to the opening speech of the sultan.

Some contemporary scholars claim that the Tanzimat leaders sought a complete fusion of the different peoples into one Ottoman nation. These scholars support their thesis by pointing out that in the envisaged Ottoman unity only one difference was to remain—religion. However, if religion was the most important identity marker for the Tanzimat leaders, this “single difference” was a crucial one. The reforms were not intended to produce a “civic nation” where religion would no longer matter.

The Ottoman leaders identified the state with its Islamic component. Even a modernizer such as Midhat Paşa perceived and presented religion as a more important identity marker than language, race or origin. In the 1878 pamphlet quoted above, he described the Muslim-Turkish population in the Bulgarian provinces as “*Musulmans Bulgares*.”⁶⁰ In Midhat Paşa’s logic, since they were Muslims, the territories they inhabited had to remain within the Ottoman Empire in case of the secession of a Bulgarian Principality. Refugees from Crimea and the Balkan countries were accepted as persecuted Muslims, which is also revealing about the nature of the empire itself as a Muslim state.⁶¹

It should be noted that many arguments of the Tanzimat reforms were based on Islam. For instance, according to the predominant discourse, the Ottoman state provided justice because Islam was a religion of justice; the Ottoman state had always been tolerant because Islam was tolerant towards other religions; and the Ottomans were able to achieve progress because Islam was opened to innovations. The Hatt-i Şerif of Gülhane began by referring to the Koran. Some thinkers went further and tried to find the roots of everything new and positive in Islam. Namık Kemal, for example, found justification in the Koran for the principle of representative government and stated that the separation of power existed in early Islamic history.⁶² As a consequence, on the rhetorical level, the transition to Islamism in the following years was relatively easy and did not constitute a complete break: Ottomanism was not replaced by Islamism but merely became more Islamist. In addition, Islamist policy in the following decades did not discredit Ottomanism among the vast majority

⁶⁰ Midhat Pacha, *La Turquie*, 21: “ce sont des descendants des Bulgares convertis à l’Islamisme... ce sont les enfants d’un même pays, d’une même race, sortis de la même souche.”

⁶¹ François Georgeon, *Abdülhamid II, Le sultan calife (1876–1909)* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 197.

⁶² Rahme, “Namık Kemal’s,” 32.

of the most numerous non-Turkish populations in the empire—the Arabs—nor among most of the Albanians. In fact, for such people the “Union of Islam” (İttihad-i İslam) was more meaningful than the abstract “Union of the Elements.”

Islamism had to counterbalance and attenuate nationalist movements among predominantly Muslim subjects like Albanians and Arabs.⁶³ In the Albanian case the Ottoman authorities initially tried to utilize the national movement against Greek and Slavic neighbors, but later on Austro-Hungary and Italy also made efforts to manipulate Albanian nationalism to their own advantage. That provoked a major change in the Ottoman authorities’ policy before the late nineteenth century: they turned against the Albanian national movement and started to suppress all manifestations of Albanian identity and language and to rely instead on the religious feelings of those Albanians who were Muslim.⁶⁴ Islamism was able to address around 70 percent of the Albanian-speaking population, but in a stronger and more effective way.

The growing role of Islam also reflected the changing composition of the Ottoman population after the consecutive loss of certain territories inhabited mostly by non-Muslims, combined with population exchange that further increased the proportion of Muslims in the empire.

Islam was not simply the religion of the sultan and the majority of his subjects. The sultan was at the same time Caliph of all Muslims, and the Holy Places of Islam were on Ottoman territory; the Ottoman Empire was the largest and most powerful Muslim state. Thus Islamism was directly related to Ottoman patriotism. The Caliphate was not only a means of counter-reaction to Christian threat; it also helped to keep under “spiritual” control people whose territories were politically and militarily lost.⁶⁵ That was not completely theoretical, and after secession from the Ottoman Empire, political and intellectual leaders in some Arab countries in North Africa developed a more positive attitude towards Istanbul than before, when there were various tensions between capital and provinces. From the point of view of these already separate Muslim states, Islamic unity was seen as a loose, decentralized superstructure,⁶⁶ similar to the idea of Ottoman unity.

⁶³ Georgeon, *Abdülhamid II*, 197.

⁶⁴ Clayer, *Aux origines*, 539 ff.

⁶⁵ Jacob M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 36–37, 39 (1st ed., 1990); Georgeon, *Abdülhamid II*, 194, 198.

⁶⁶ Mohamed Farid Bey, *Etude sur la crise*.

The overthrow of the Hamidian regime did not end Islamist policies altogether, and the Young Turks relied on them in several ways. During the Balkan Wars, but especially during World War I, Islamism played an important role in international propaganda seeking support from Muslims from abroad. Religion remained an important tool for influence among non-Turkish Muslim people. In the Albanian case, for example, it was used even more actively than before: the attempts after 1908 to impose the use of the Arabic script to write Albanian could be considered an “Islamist” policy, compared to the restrictions against writing in Albanian at all, which were characteristic of the preceding decade and might have even appeared to be an attempt at Turkification.

Islam was instrumentalized by the Turkish resistance movement during the War of Independence. At that stage, but also later, under the Republic, it was very important in the relationship with Kurds—already the most numerous non-Turkish minority. In fact, in its early stages the Turkish national movement after World War I had predominantly “Ottoman” and “Islamic” rhetoric, in contrast to the aggressive laicism typical of the late 1920s and the 1930s.⁶⁷ As a consequence, measures for secularization in the Republic of Turkey were introduced after most other major reforms of the Kemalist revolution.

Islam remained a self-evident part of Turkish national identity, and it was utilized on many occasions by the “secular” and “Kemalist” authorities of the Republic as well (not to speak of the political Islam after the late 1960s). That was partly a concession to the traditionalism of the society but also a response to the need to integrate the last remaining “external” element in the Turkish society during the Republic—the Kurds.

Ottomanism and Turkish Identity

Interest in the Turkish language and Turkish origins was catalyzed by foreign scholars and intellectuals. Later on, within the Ottoman Empire itself, scientific societies prepared the ground for political interest toward (Pan)-Turkism.⁶⁸ The changing attitude towards Turkish identity in the Ottoman milieu could be most easily exemplified through language policy in the fields of public life, propaganda and education. Of course Ottoman

⁶⁷ Erik-Jan Zürcher, “The Vocabulary of Muslim Nationalism,” *International Journal of the Sociology of Science* 137 (1999): 81–92.

⁶⁸ Landau, *Pan-Turkism*, 42.

Turkish was the language of the state administration, but the authorities showed no ambition to impose it on all subjects. Clear cases when the Turkish language was considered an identity marker were relatively rare until the 1870s, and even at that time the authorities insisted only on the practical need to know it. For example, the law on the provincial city councils demanded that its members be able to express themselves in Turkish (*türkçe tekmil edebilmek*).⁶⁹ The text of the 1876 Constitution (Article 18) that is often cited as “declaring Turkish as the official language” in fact demanded its knowledge for appointments in the state administration.

The fact that Tanzimat Ottomanism envisaged a dual loyalty, that it allowed self-identification not only with the state but also with a specific community, is reflected also in the multilingual propaganda of that time. The first priority was to make the propaganda understandable, and newspaper and magazine editors made efforts to write in simple and comprehensible language. In addition, the propaganda was addressed to a not only multireligious and multiethnic but obviously also a multilingual population, and the authorities did their best to reach this public. The first official newspaper of the Ottoman state, *Takvim-i Vekai*, was multilingual. The authorities began to publish separate editions of the newspaper in different languages: the first and longest-running edition was in French (*Le Moniteur Ottoman*), to disseminate propaganda abroad and among foreigners at home, as well as among subjects who knew French. For internal use some newspaper issues were also published in Greek, Armenian, Arab and even Persian editions.⁷⁰ This policy was more fully developed in the provincial (*vilayet*) newspapers. About half of them were published in Turkish and, parallel to it, in the other most-used language of the province—Arab, Greek, Armenian, Bulgarian or Serbian. Some *vilayet* newspapers were published (at least for a while) in three languages (*Edirne*) or even four (*Selanik*). In many *vilayets*, mainly in Anatolia and in the “Albanian” *vilayets* in the Balkans, the official newspapers were published only in Turkish.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Art. 18 of the *Vilayet belediye kanunu* (1877): *Düstur* (1299=1881/2), vol. 4, 538.

⁷⁰ Orhan Koloğlu, *Takvimi vekayi. Türk basında 150 yıl, 1831–1981* (Ankara: Çağdaş Gazetecileri Derneği Yayınları, s.a. [1982]), 32–43; Nesimi Yazıcı, *Takvim-i Vekayi “Belgeler”* (Ankara: Gazi Üniversitesi, 1983), 51–65.

⁷¹ Bülent Varlık, “Yerel Basın Öncüsü: Vilayet Gazeteleri,” in *Tanzimat’tan-Cumhuriyet’e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 1 (İstanbul: İletişim, 1985), 99–102; Uygur Kocabaşoğlu and Ali Birinci, “Osmanlı Vilayet Gazete ve Matbaaları Üzerine Gözlemler,” *Kebikeç* 1, no. 2 (1995), 101–121.

One of the first fields in which the pre-eminence of the Turkish language was stressed was education. Even in the Lyceum of Galatasaray, Turkish was listed first among the subjects of the curriculum.⁷² With the Education Law of 1869, the Turkish language was introduced as a subject in non-Muslim schools, and later regulations reinforced this requirement.⁷³ Finally, in 1908, the Committee of Union and Progress—the leading force of the Young Turk Revolution—stated that the study of the Turkish language should be mandatory.⁷⁴

The expansion of modern centralized administration led to a further increase in the role of the “official language,” while non-Turkish languages lost importance even as propaganda tools. The bilingualism of the local press proved transitory, and as early as the 1880s there was a trend of abandoning the second language in the *vilayet* newspapers. In this way, already under Abdulhamid II, Ottomanist propaganda became not only more Islamist but also more “Turkish.”

Turkism appealed to a much smaller proportion of Ottoman subjects, but once again territorial losses changed the situation, making the “Turks” an overwhelming majority at the end of World War I. In this regard the loss of the Albanian provinces in 1912 already contributed to the shift towards Turkification.⁷⁵ Concerning the developments before this moment, and especially before the Balkan Wars, it should be stressed that Turkish nationalism was fully compatible with Ottomanism. At that time many Turkish nationalists also presented themselves as “Ottomanists,” for these were not necessarily mutually exclusive.⁷⁶ Even Ziya Gökalp—one of the well-known figures of the Pan-Turkist movement, and later one of the founding fathers of Turkish nationalism—advocated Ottomanism before the Balkan Wars.⁷⁷

Still, it is legitimate to ask what kind of Ottomanism was professed by all those people who at the same time were, or at least were easily converted into, Turkish nationalists. Obviously they not only perceived themselves as “Muslims and Turks” but were starting to have an organic perception of the nation. Their interpretations of Ottomanism could equally count as one of the first pages of the history of Turkish nationalism.

⁷² “Règlement Organique de Lycée Imperial” (Galatasay), Article 4, in Aristarchi, *Législation*, vol. 3, 316.

⁷³ Kushner, *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism*, 93.

⁷⁴ Landau, *Pan-Turkism*, 48; Ülker, “Contextualising ‘Turkification,’” 619.

⁷⁵ Ülker, “Contextualising ‘Turkification,’” 622.

⁷⁶ Türesay, *Être intellectuel*, 471.

⁷⁷ Ülker, “Contextualising ‘Turkification,’” 618.

The Pan-Turkist dimension of Turkism was, to a large extent, imported by the Muslim Turkic intellectuals from Russia who took refuge in the Ottoman Empire. The milieu they were coming from played a decisive role in shaping Pan-Turkism as an answer to Pan-Slavism, which in turn was intended to answer the Pan-Germanist threat.⁷⁸ Just like Islamism, Pan-Turkism had to contribute to the reinforcement of the Ottoman state, which was the only independent “Turkish” state and the natural center of this movement. Pan-Turkism reached its peak during the conflict with Russia during World War I when, in combination with Islamism, it was widely used in propaganda, in part because Germany was interested in both of them.⁷⁹ Pan-Turkism depended so much on the situation abroad that it did not disappear with the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in 1918 but persisted for some time in the Turkic areas of the former Russian Empire until Soviet power over these territories was consolidated.⁸⁰ Thereafter the policy of strengthening the Turkish identity was strictly limited to the borders of the new republic.

The profound transformation of Ottomanism had also a spatial dimension. The idea of the whole empire as a “fatherland” remained abstract, while the perception of the peoples that inhabited it had specific dimensions. On the northwest of the Bosphorus the Bulgarians identified with European Turkey or the Balkan peninsula;⁸¹ Albanians also perceived themselves as a European nation.⁸² At the same time the Arab peoples identified with the Arab lands and more specifically with a particular part of them (such as Syria).⁸³ Even the Turkish-speaking elites did not regard all the parts of the empire as the fatherland. Once again the shrinking of Ottoman territories played an important role. Ottoman studies usually regard Rumelia and Anatolia as the “core regions” of the empire, as opposed to the more superficially controlled Arab provinces, as well as other temporary possessions or semi-independent principalities in Europe. After most of the territories in the Balkans were lost during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, only one “core region” remained—Anatolia.

⁷⁸ Landau, *Pan-Turkism*, 4, 8.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 49, 53.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 55–56.

⁸¹ Dessislava Lilova, “The Balkans as Homeland,” *CAS Working Papers Series* 1, 2007, accessed July 14, 2011, at <http://www.cas.bg/uploads/files/Sofia-Academic-Nexus-WP/Dessislava%20Lilova.pdf>.

⁸² Clayer, *Aux origines*.

⁸³ Abu-Manneh, “The Christians between Ottomanism,” 288.

At this time Anatolia took on a special role both as the core of the empire and as a quasi-national "Turkish" core that had to be strengthened.⁸⁴

The concept of Anatolia itself was substantially shaped by the developments at the end of World War I, and the national borders coincided with the territories under Ottoman control at the time of the armistice of October 30, 1918. The War of Independence was in fact an attempt to protect these frontiers. From this point of view, the birth of the Republic of Turkey is a good example of the otherwise problematic concept of "defensive nationalism." By contrast, during the resistance after 1918, Ottoman-Turkish officers did not see the Arab provinces as a part of the "fatherland" to protect. These developments shaped the present-day geographical notion of Anatolia; previously, this name was used only for the eastern half of today's Turkey.⁸⁵

Thus the idea of an Ottoman fatherland, one of the first and most successful elements in the attempt to build a common identity of the Ottoman subjects, went through a profound transformation, very much parallel to the transition from all-inclusive but loose Ottoman identity to a more narrow identification with Islam and Turkish language and origin. The initial concept of the empire as a fatherland, equally including border provinces like Silistre or Yemen, was too abstract, but more importantly, these territories could not be successfully defended in the long run. Losing the Balkan and the Arab provinces, as well as the Islamization and Turkification of Anatolia, led to the creation of a smaller but more easily recognizable fatherland.

Towards a National Identity

As mentioned earlier, as early as the Tanzimat era, some foreigners proposed that all subjects of the Ottoman Empire should transform into one "Ottoman nation." But state authorities were not only more cautious and realistic concerning the practical implementation of such a project; they were reluctant to accept the very concept of a nation. This concept gradually gained followers among Muslim Turkish-speaking elites in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially after the 1908 revolution. However, it was not the "Ottoman nation" proposed by the

⁸⁴ Ülker, "Contextualising 'Turkification,'" 615, 617, 624–625, 629–630.

⁸⁵ Zürcher, "The Vocabulary"; Stéphane Yerasimos, "L'obsession territoriale ou la douleur des membres fantômes," in *La Turquie*, ed. Semih Vaner (Paris: Fayard/Ceri, 2005).

above-mentioned foreigners, but a narrower idea of a Turkish Muslim nation, in other words comprising only the “purest” Ottomans—an ethnic and organic nation, not a political or civic one.

In the early twentieth-century debates among Ottoman-Turkish intellectuals, Ottomanism was seen either as an alternative to Turkish nationalism (Akçura) or as something inseparable from Turkish and Islamic identity (Akçura’s critics). Already at that time most of the Ottoman intellectuals who discussed the problem of Ottomanism were preoccupied mostly with the identity issues of the Muslim and Turkish core of the Ottoman subjects. There were heated debates between followers of Ottomanism and Turkism, and what was common in their approaches was that they were concerned mostly with those who were considered to be at the same time Muslims, Turks and Ottoman subjects but were irrelevant for the non-Muslim and non-Turkic peoples in the empire. Finally the advocates of the idea of Ottoman identity in the early twentieth century gradually adopted the way of thinking and the vocabulary of modern nationalism.⁸⁶

As a result there was a considerable difference between the discussions among the intellectual leaders of the Muslim-Turkish elite in the early twentieth century and the propaganda aimed at not only the “purest” Ottomans but all the subjects of the empire. That difference could also be seen in the way the Tanzimat policies were understood by some early-twentieth-century political thinkers. “The union of the elements,” “the fusion of the interests” and “the different peoples living in harmony” were interpreted at that point as an ambition to create “one single Ottoman nation.” Such an interpretation was surely anachronistic: the authorities never aimed to create such a nation, and there is no reason to claim that they had “failed” in this regard. It is easy to see the root of the problem—the term “Ottomanism” was introduced by people thinking in national terms.

The changing meaning of the word *millet* is the best-known example of this gradual transition in the perception of collective identities in late Ottoman society. It was used initially for religious communities but ended up as a name for national communities. Another example is the translation of the phrase “regardless of religion and sect” (*din ve mezheb bakılmayarak*) from Ottoman Turkish into other languages as early as the nineteenth century, as well as in later studies, where it usually appears

⁸⁶ Türesay, *Être intellectuel*, 462–463.

as “regardless of religion and nation.” In high-style Ottoman Turkish, two words are very often used to say the same thing. Translators usually try to find synonyms in order to preserve these constructions, but here the translation of “sect” into “nation” reveals an important difference in the way of thinking. For those who were translating, people differed not only by religion, but also by nationality. Even without translating into a different language, Yusuf Akçura changed the initial meaning of the phrase when he wrote that Sultan Mahmud II and his followers believed in the possibility of transforming populations that varied by race and religion into one single nation.⁸⁷ Sultan Mahmud II, as could be seen from the same paragraph of Akçura’s text, had in mind only people of different *faiths*, without referring at all to race (*ırk*) or anything like it (such as tribe, nation or people of different origin). The expression “one single nation” (*tek bir millet*) is also added by Akçura—such an expression is not found in the writings of the Tanzimat leaders. Akçura’s definition of “Ottomanism” was far from the way of thinking of the Tanzimat leaders. A representative of a new generation, born in Russia and educated in France, later considered one of the founding fathers of Turkish nationalism,⁸⁸ he attributed to them his own way of perceiving identity in terms of nations. Ziya Gökalp, for example, once said that the Ottoman nation was like the American one.⁸⁹ It is not surprising that Gökalp, one of the “fathers of Turkish nationalism,” would perceive the “Ottoman *millet*” as a modern nation. Obviously the definitions of Ottomanism dating from the early twentieth century reflect the mentality of their authors, not the realities of the Tanzimat. The same is true of many historians, but what is more important is that in the early twentieth century, Ottomanism was not simply more “Islamist” and “Turkish”—from all sides it started to be discussed in national terms. Thus Ottomanism lost its *raison d’être* as a supranational political project.

* * *

The picture of Ottomanism presented above, as a vague, contradictory and ever-changing project, might seem complicated and even confused

⁸⁷ Akçura, *Üç Tarz-ı*, 20: “devletin ırk ve dini farklı tebaasını serbestlik ve müsavat ile, emniyet ve karşılıklı dostluk ile mezc ve terkip edip tek bir millet haline sokmanın imkânına inanıyorlardı.”

⁸⁸ François Georgeon, *Aux origines du nationalisme turc: Yusuf Akçura (1876–1935)* (Paris: ADPF, 1980).

⁸⁹ Safrastyan, *Doktrina osmanizma*, 118.

when compared to some of the clear-cut definitions (“one single Ottoman nation,” “civic nation,” “imperial supranationalism”) mentioned at the beginning. But it reflects the very nature of the identity policies in the late Ottoman Empire, which were not always coherent and, most importantly, changed according to the conditions and the challenges they had to address. Even if these clear-cut definitions were incompatible with one another, most of them reflected some aspects of the Ottoman identity politics among certain political milieus and at a specific time. In order to achieve a more systematic view of the concept of Ottomanism, one needs to consider several factors.

First of all, we should take into account that “Ottomanism” was not a clearly formulated political doctrine but a term freely interpreted by intellectuals and later by historians, and what is considered relevant to the concept depends very much on the individual choice of present-day scholars. The very fact that most of these scholars think in terms of nations led them to perceive Ottomanism as a national project, or at least to explain at length that it was *not* such a project. Furthermore, it depends whether this “Ottoman nation” is seen as alien and endangering, as the national historiographies in the Balkans would have it, or as an alternative version of the present Turkish national identity. Usually scholars who criticize the “Ottomanist” policy claim that the authorities intended to create “one single Ottoman nation.” The majority of those who are, or are regarded as, pro-Turkish and pro-Ottoman usually describe it in vaguer terms; they also stress the ambition to offer equal rights and to ensure the peaceful cohabitation of the various peoples.

Second, given the nature of Ottomanism as a policy to forge a supranational identity, one should not forget the input of the various actors trying to define it and to influence it. The Ottoman authorities were the main policy-makers, but they had to take into account the demands of community leaders and foreign powers. Foreigners who were exporting ready-made concepts of a single “Ottoman nation” had limited direct influence, but nowadays their writings are largely quoted—as they are most often in French, they are more easily accessible and understandable than the writings in Ottoman Turkish or in other local languages. Actors from within the Ottoman space were trying to combine the official demand for loyalty toward the state and the sultan with their own political and national agendas; Greek, Bulgarian and Albanian nationalists even tried to benefit from the imperial framework. Thus even if the idea of common Ottoman identity was a project of the imperial authorities, it implied the participation of other actors (Muslim and non-Muslim, Turkish and non-Turkish),

who inevitably tried to reformulate the concept to their own advantage. At the same time the Ottoman political elite was trying to instrumentalize Bulgarian and Albanian nationalism to counterbalance the interventions of neighboring states (Greece, Serbia) and empires (Russia).

Third, the priorities of state policies reflected the changing political situation both internationally and within the empire, including its territorial shrinking. The stress on legal equality and religious tolerance during the nineteenth-century reforms conformed to the expectations of the non-Muslim peoples of the Ottoman Empire and even more to the demands of the Great Powers. Thus Ottomanism in its earlier, Tanzimat-era version was an answer mostly to national movements of the Christian peoples in the empire. The flourishing of non-Muslim nationalisms, the loss of certain non-Muslim provinces and the indignation against Western interventions provoked the rise of political Islam and in fact of a more Islamist Ottomanism. More generally new political ideas came from Europe, but the political projects of the Ottoman elite were also a response to European pressure. The stress on Islam also reflected the changing proportions of Muslims and non-Muslims in the shrinking empire. A second wave of expanding national movements among predominantly Muslim peoples and the loss of Muslim provinces—the Albanian lands in the Balkan wars and later the Arab provinces—favored the rise of Turkism, meaning a more “Turkish” version of the already Islamist Ottomanism. In the end, defending the territories that remained from the Ottoman Empire after the Mudros Armistice of October 30, 1918, turned out to be the Turkish War of Independence.

The fourth important factor is related to the changing perceptions of collective identity at that time. The Ottomanism of the Tanzimat period was the answer to nationalist movements by people who were not thinking in national terms. This Ottomanism was compatible with political Islam and even with Turkish nationalism, as it was compatible with other nationalisms. The gradual failure of the Ottomanist project was paralleled by the spread of the national idea in its “ethnic” or “organic” version among Ottoman-Turkish elites. Paradoxically, the debates that the last defenders of Ottomanism had with various nationalists encouraged them to start thinking in national terms.

*FAMOUS MACEDONIA, THE LAND OF ALEXANDER:*¹
MACEDONIAN IDENTITY AT THE CROSSROADS
OF GREEK, BULGARIAN AND SERBIAN NATIONALISM

Tchavdar Marinov

The Conflicting Claims and Their Entanglement

This chapter tries to offer a new perspective on one of the most heated nationalist debates in Europe: the Greek/(former-Yugoslav-)Macedonian/Bulgarian dispute over Macedonia's past. It specifically concerns the legitimacy of modern Macedonian identity and is centered on the question "Who are the Macedonians?" As is well-known, Greece still refuses to recognize a country calling itself "Republic of Macedonia." Today Athens and Skopje are involved in a debate about the "true" national affinity of the past of ancient Macedonia, with its iconic rulers Philip II and Alexander the Great. Less dramatic, but at least as acute, is the controversy between Skopje and Sofia. The latter believes that Slav-speaking Macedonians' true ethnic identity is Bulgarian, that their language is a western Bulgarian dialect and that almost all the past of the Macedonian nation (aside from ancient times) is part of the history of the Bulgarian people. As far as Serbia is concerned, the Orthodox Patriarchate in Belgrade not only refused to recognize a separate Macedonian Orthodox Church (a stance the Bulgarian and the Greek Churches also took) but even initiated the creation of a parallel and loyal ecclesiastic hierarchy for the "small Slavic brother." Meanwhile, Skopje faced Albanian minority activism of the kind that Belgrade could not handle in Kosovo. Pessimistic analysts continue to predict dark scenarios for the republic's future, such as federalization or even a territorial breakup into Slav-Macedonian and Albanian parts.

Given this background, it is quite understandable that the polemics around Macedonia and all things Macedonian have been examined in terms of mutually exclusive national ideologies and strategies. However, the analysis here takes the opposite starting point. It suggests that Balkan national ideologies—Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian and Macedonian—are

¹ "Makedonia xakousti," unofficial anthem of Greek Macedonia.

historically entangled, to the extent that, in many respects, they *constructed each other*.

For the sake of clarity, let me first take a closer look at the claims in question. Here is how a Bulgarian historian nowadays interprets the existence of Macedonian national identity (usually stigmatized in Bulgaria under the derogatory term “Macedonism”—*makedonizăm*): “As an offspring of Greater Serbian propaganda and aspirations in Macedonia, Macedonism was meant to split the Bulgarian people, to denationalize a part of it on anti-Bulgarian grounds. Macedonism sought to destroy the sentiment of the Bulgarians from Macedonia of having historical roots identical with those of the Bulgarians from Moesia [northern Bulgaria] and Thrace, to destroy the feeling of belonging to the Bulgarian nation.”²

The polemicist clearly insists on the “purely Bulgarian” character of the Slavs in former Yugoslav Macedonia and obviously believes that if they identify themselves as Macedonians, this is because a Serbian chauvinist strategy has manipulated them in the past. The Macedonian nation is thus explicitly rejected as a product of a denationalizing propaganda directed by Belgrade.

And here is how, in the 1920s, a Serbian author denounced the “evil genius” who promoted the term “Macedonian people” (already in informal usage for the Slavic population of the southernmost part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes): “the answer is brief: it is Bulgaria [...] The not-well-informed readers will understand the real reason for the Bulgarian greed and for the eternal unfair and constant preoccupation with ‘Macedonia’ (*Makedonijata*) and with some invented distinct people of ‘Macedonians’ (*Makedoncite*) unknown to history.”³

The polemicist was trying to demonstrate the “purely Serbian” character of the southern province and of the population living on both sides of the Vardar River. And he obviously believed that if local people identified themselves—or were identified by observers—as “Macedonians,” this was because Bulgarian propaganda, pursuing its irredentist goals, had successfully introduced the label. His rejection of the supposed Bulgarian manipulation took on a somewhat sarcastic nuance with the usage of the

² Dimităr Gotsev et al., *Makedoniya. Istoriya i politicheska sädba*, vol. 1 (Stara Zagora: Znanie, 1994), 255–256.

³ Panta Radosavljević, *Šta je Mačedonija?* (Belgrade, 1925), 14, cited by Konstantinos Katsanos, “I Makedonia ton Servon, 1870–1941: Apo tin Palaia sti Notia Servia,” in *Makedonikes tautotites sto hrono. Diepistimonikes prosengiseis*, ed. Ioannis Stefandis, Vlasidis Vlasidis and Evangelos Kofos (Athens: Pataki, 2008), 236.

definite articles *-ta* and *-te*, typical of the Bulgarian language but by no means of Serbian: their conspicuous presence in the Macedonian Slavic idioms is perhaps likewise seen as the result of proselytizing propaganda directed by Sofia.

When reading such passages, one question arises: how are these mutually exclusive claims possible? Both of the authors seem certain that they can identify the political master who “fabricated” the Macedonians: the Bulgarians for the Serbian critic, and the Serbs for the Bulgarian. To this one can add the point of view of contemporary Greek scholars: for them, Macedonian national identity is a result of a “pan-Slavic” and/or communist plot. More precisely, they see it as an unfortunate outcome of Tito’s ethnic engineering in the framework of the former Yugoslavia.⁴ Here they enjoy the support of Bulgarian historians. These historians try to back up the thesis about Serbian “guilt” with a reference to the national policy of communist Yugoslavia—namely, through the problematic assumption that the latter was a kind of “Greater Serbia.” However, to complicate the picture, some Serbian scholars also agree that Tito’s regime was responsible for the existence of Macedonians. These scholars say that, under the Macedonian label, the Yugoslav communists actually continued the previous Bulgarian denationalization of “Southern Serbs”⁵...

This clash of interpretations is certainly difficult to understand. It is a question not only of exclusive nationalist conceptions of Macedonia and Macedonians: “Macedonian Bulgarians” for the Bulgarians, simply “Slavs-speaker” or “Slav-speaking Greeks” for the Greeks and (at least in the past, albeit less often today) “Southern Serbs”/“Old Serbians” for the Serbian authors. The paradoxical aspect of these debates is the mutual blame for the “responsibility” for the construction of Macedonian nationalism.

There are, however, certainties shared by all of Macedonia’s neighbors: first, that the Macedonian nation is a “new” phenomenon, without historical roots in the distant past, and second, that it is a product of Yugoslav communism. In many respects, these ideas seem plausible, despite the possible frustration they may cause Macedonian historians. In the case of their nation, some of the fundamental means of national construction (army, educational system, periodicals) appeared only during and after World War II. The first armed forces with a clear Macedonian

⁴ Here, the “classical” argumentation is that of Evangelos Kofos, “The Macedonian Question: The Politics of Mutation,” *Balkan Studies* 27 (1986).

⁵ Jovan Trifunovski, *Makedoniziranje Južne Srbije* (Belgrade: Cicero, 1995).

nationalist character were the Macedonian partisan detachments operating within the framework of Tito's Yugoslav resistance movement. The first schools in the Macedonian language—claimed as *Macedonian language*—were those established by the same partisans in 1943–1944.⁶ The first Macedonian daily newspaper, *Nova Makedonija*, was started only in October 1944, by the same political actors. The Macedonian Orthodox Church was established by the Yugoslav communist regime in 1958–1959. For many observers, these data seem enough to determine “when” the Macedonian nation—in the sense of an institutionally structured collectivity—appeared.

Nevertheless, as *ideology* and as *identity*, Macedonian nationalism is certainly an earlier phenomenon. As we shall see, its first manifestations date back to the second half of the nineteenth century. And, in fact, contrary to their own partial solutions, Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian nationalism have largely *contributed* to the formation of Macedonian national identity—the one that is today such a challenge to them. Contrary to the simplistic scholarly interpretations that see contemporary Macedonians as the invention of communists or Tito or as a Serbian fabrication, Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian politics have shaped specific aspects of Macedonian national ideology.⁷ As we shall see, in the case of Macedonia and of contemporary Macedonian national ideology, different Balkan nationalisms are deeply intertwined—in spite of their declared mutual exclusiveness. The present study attempts to make an inventory of the historical dis/entanglements, on Macedonian ground, among Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian and Macedonian nationalism and of their common constructions and representations since the nineteenth century. In this way it tries to demonstrate how the national constructions could result from a previous common identity that split into rival narratives and strategies.

The study is inspired by the methodological criticism developed in Bénédicte Zimmermann and Michael Werner's concept of *histoire croisée*.⁸ Similar methodologies characterize the historiographical genres of “Entangled” and “Shared Histories.” This choice is not random. On the

⁶ Ivan Gligorovski, *Prvite učitelji na makedonski jazik (1943–1948 godina)* (Skopje: Az-Buki, 2007).

⁷ So far, the only similar assessment of the genesis of Macedonian nationalism belongs to Kyril Drezov, “Macedonian Identity: An Overview of the Major Claims,” in *The New Macedonian Question*, ed. James Pettifer (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press, 1999).

⁸ Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, “Penser l'histoire croisée: entre empirie et réflexivité,” *Annales* 1 (2003); *De la comparaison à l'histoire croisée*, ed. Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann (Paris: Seuil, 2004); Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmer-

one hand, the simple comparative approach is inadequate in this case. It does not make sense to compare, for instance, Greek and Macedonian nationalisms, as they evolved in different historical eras and circumstances. For instance, Macedonian historiography was structured much later—around and mostly after World War II. Hence, the risk of comparing incomparable phenomena developed within different *Zeitschichten*: the Greek narrative has clearer institutional continuity, while the Macedonian one is marked by serious historical discontinuities. On the other hand, the ideological “contributions” exchanged between Greek and Macedonian, or Bulgarian and Macedonian, Serbian and Macedonian nationalisms cannot be analyzed within the framework of the history of “cultural transfers.” The latter takes the phenomena under investigation as entities frozen in time, while here they must be seen as dynamic realities that have largely changed over time. Moreover, they are intertwined in an exchange process that has shaped “new” patterns of ideology and identity.

The thesis that Macedonian nationalism is largely the result of dis/entanglement of Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian national ideologies does not make Macedonian identity less “legitimate” or more “constructed” than the others. It means that the history of Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian and—in the present case—Macedonian nationalism cannot be fully understood without taking into account the specific evolution of the other nationalisms and of the links between them. The main premise of the chapter is that the national ideologies involved in the “Macedonian question” should be studied not merely as conflicting claims but as intertwined narratives, myths, symbolic forms—and also social actors and institutional continuities—that, since the nineteenth century, have evolved together and *thanks to each other*. This is certainly an aspect that the different nationalisms, with their exclusivist pretensions, fail to take into account.

Among the Southeast European identities, one—which is nowadays virtually nonexistent—also seems crucial for the understanding of the Macedonian case. This is the South-Slav—or *Yugoslav*—project in its various national, quasi-national or supranational articulations.⁹ Launched during the early modern period in its “Illyrian form” by writers who today would be defined as “Croats,” it ended up with the dissolution of communist

mann, “Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity,” *History and Theory* 45 (2006).

⁹ On the history of the Yugoslav project: Dejan Djokić, *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea, 1918–1992* (London: Hurst, 2003).

Yugoslavia founded during World War II by Josip Broz Tito—another “Croat” by origin. The Yugoslav context is certainly the right temporal frame, closing but also opening the present discussion.

*Macedonian “Proto-Nationalism” and Its Journey Back to Macedonia:
The Illyrian Inspiration*

Some of the contemporary literature in “nationalism studies” emphasizes the existence of old “ethnic” foundations of nineteenth-century nationalism. Leading theorists such as Anthony Smith and John Armstrong believe that modern nations have deep roots in pre-modern “myths, memories, values and symbols.” There were identity beliefs or *mythomoteurs* that shaped communities defined by such authors as “nations before nationalism.” In fact, this “evolutionist” perspective is quite close to the traditionalist views of national historiographies: it is no coincidence that Smith is one of the rare theorists of nationalism discussed by historians in the Republic of Macedonia.¹⁰ But even a “modernist” in nationalism studies such as Eric Hobsbawm admits the existence of early supra-local ties and forms of collective identity that he designates in his famous *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* as a “popular proto-nationalism.”

Indeed, one can find medieval and early modern “Macedonian” narratives and symbols that could fit into the definition of *mythomoteur* or in that of proto-national ideology. From the outset, these referred to the glory of the ancient rulers, Philip II and Alexander III: the very name “Macedonia” was inevitably related to these figures. The problem is that these references did not necessarily originate from the geographic territory of Macedonia, and even less from the local Slavic population. Moreover, if Macedonia has always been directly associated with the images of its semi-legendary ancient kings, even the idea of its geographical location changed considerably throughout the medieval period.

In the second century CE, Claudius Ptolemy imagined “Macedonia” to be more or less where it is considered to be today, especially if one defines “Macedonia” as exclusively the contemporary Greek region. In other words, the northern regions around Skopje (the current capital of the Republic of Macedonia) were not identified as Macedonian lands. However, for reasons that are still unclear, over the next eleven centuries,

¹⁰ Jovan Donev, “Nekoi teoretsko-metodološki razmisli za procesite na gradenje sovremena makedonska nacija,” *Glasnik na Institutot za nacionalna istorija* 40 (1996).

Macedonia's location "shifted" significantly—both in Byzantine and in Western European mappings. In general, for most of the Middle Ages, it has been situated in various areas between the two major Byzantine cities—the capital, Constantinople, and the "co-capital" (*symvasilevousa*), Salonika.¹¹ Thus it was approximately equated with the region that is nowadays considered "Thrace."

This mapping is confirmed by the Byzantine administrative divisions: by the beginning of the ninth century, a province (*thema*) was formed, "Macedonia," whose center was Adrianople (today Edirne, Turkey). The founder of the Byzantine "Macedonian dynasty"—Basil I (reigned from 867 to 886)—originated from precisely this region. In Byzantine terminology, the city of Philippoupolis—today Plovdiv in Bulgarian Upper Thrace—was rightfully considered to be "Macedonian": it was founded by Philip II. Bulgarian historians often emphasize this "translocation" of Macedonia. In their view, it pre-empts the possibility of imagining a medieval history of the "Macedonian people," as long as the territories and the personalities labeled "Macedonian" were "actually" in geographic Thrace.

However, by the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth, Macedonia "reappeared" in its Ptolemaic place.¹² This fact certainly indicates a late-Byzantine revival of ancient scholarly heritage. As a matter of fact, references to Macedonia never disappeared in the medieval (particularly Byzantine) geographic and historical imagination. The *Alexander Romance* of "Pseudo-Callisthenes" was one of the most popular readings among literate *Romaioi*, and a number of Byzantine sources referred to Macedonia as a classical land of Alexander the Great. Modern Greek scholars insist that the term was applied exclusively to Byzantine territories and to a Byzantine/"Greek" population—never to a Slavic one. The last observation also seems to hold true for the medieval Slavic—Bulgarian and Serbian—usages of the names "Macedonia" and "Macedonians." For instance, Evtimiy of Tărnovo, Patriarch of Bulgaria between 1375 and 1393, referred to "Macedonia" as part of the "Greek land."¹³

¹¹ More on medieval maps of Macedonia: Evangelos Livieratos, "I hartografiki taxithetisi tou toponymiou 'Makedonia,'" in *Makedonikes tautotites*; Petăr Koledarov, *Imeto Makedonia v istoricheskata geografiya* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1985).

¹² Livieratos, "I hartografiki taxithetisi," 26.

¹³ See Angeliki Delikari, "I eikona tis Makedonias kai i eikona tis 'makedonikotitas' stous slavikous laous tis Valkanikis kata ti Vyzantini periodo," in *Makedonikes tautotites*, 140–157, 160–161. The Byzantine literary sources also correct the idea (spread by Bulgarian polemical literature) that, in the medieval context, the term was never applied to today's "geographic Macedonia": Salonika was clearly imagined as a city in "Macedonia."

There is one exception to this rule: in some copies of the famous Code (*Zakonik*) of the Serbian emperor Stefan Dušan (reigned 1331–1355), he was identified as a “Macedonian tsar.” Conspicuously, this source figures in an important collection of documents edited by Skopje University: it is supposed to demonstrate the existence of a Macedonian ethnic identity back in the Middle Ages.¹⁴ However, a rival interpretation would suggest that the “Macedonian” part of Dušan’s title is due to the fact that, during his reign, Serbia annexed Byzantine Macedonia and/or that it represents a reference to ancient Macedonia and to the grandeur of Alexander the Great. Such identification of medieval rulers with the ancient king was not unknown to Slavic authors. The Bulgarian writer and Kievan metropolitan Grigoriy Tsamblak even compared the Ottoman sultan Bayezid I to Alexander the Great.¹⁵

It must be noted that the references to the great tsar Stefan Dušan as “Macedonian” do not date back from the period of his reign but are relatively late—from the seventeenth century. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Macedonian designation circulated in the South Slavic context, but again outside Macedonia: it was typical of Dalmatian, Bosnian, Montenegrin and Serbian literature from that period.¹⁶ Its usage was obviously inspired by the cult of antiquity, as was typical of the Western cultural pattern of the Dalmatian cities. Again a complementary trend appeared in this area: instead of identifying modern (particularly Slavic) rulers with the ancient Macedonian ones, the latter were “Slavicized.”

The first speculations about a Slavic character of the ancient Macedonians are to be found in the work of the Dominican monk Vinko Pribojević *De Origine successibusque Slavorum* (1532). An early precursor of the Illyrian movement, Pribojević equated ancient Macedonians, Illyrians and Slavs. From this perspective, Alexander and Aristotle, as well as Diocletian and Saint Jerome, appeared to be of Slavic stock. Pribojević’s

¹⁴ *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, vol. 1 (Skopje: University of Cyril and Methodius, 1985), 137–138.

¹⁵ In an anonymous Serbian relation about the prince Lazar Hrebeljanović and his heroic death in the Battle of Kosovo Polje (1389), the author compared the advancement of Murad I with the campaign of Alexander in Asia. See Delikari, “I eikona tis Makedonias,” 163, 175.

¹⁶ Writers from Montenegro, Herzegovina and Sarajevo declared they had originated from “Macedonian lands”: “Obnova pečke patrijaršije,” in Vladimir Ćorović, *Istorija srpskog naroda*, vol. 1 (Banja Luka and Belgrade: Glas srpski/Ars libri, 1997). Ćorović notes that, in some Serbian folk songs, Peć (in Metohija/Kosova) and even Smederevo (on the right bank of the Danube) are situated in “Macedonia.”

follower Mavro Orbin/Mauro Orbini likewise affirmed the Slavic character of Alexander and of the ancient Macedonians (*Il Regno degli Slavi*, 1601). Ivan Gundulić, Dubrovnik's most famous baroque poet, exalted Alexander as "Serbian" (*Srbljanin*).¹⁷ Later, the Croatian enlightener Matija Antun Relković claimed that Alexander the Great was amazed by the bravery and the military glory (*slava*) of the Slavonians (*Slavonci*). It is important to note likewise that the Albanian ruler Skanderbeg was regularly identified as the "Second Alexander" in the Italian baroque literature.¹⁸ Not surprisingly, in Dalmatian poetry, this new "Alexander" easily became Slav—in a work by Andrija Kačić Miošić, to be exact.¹⁹

As the Dalmatian example shows, the designation "Macedonian" spread in early modern Western-influenced cultural contexts. Again in the seventeenth century, as well as in the eighteenth, the term "Macedonians" and even "Macedonian nation" was applied in countries such as Hungary and Russia to populations coming from the Balkans. This is, for instance, the case of a "Macedonian regiment," recruited by Russian authorities among Balkan settlers on the territory of what is now Ukraine.²⁰ Understandably, modern Macedonian historians consider the existence of such sources as a confirmation of an age-old ethnic continuity. However, these categorizations risk being purely external, without any real impact on the Slavic population in geographic Macedonia. Skopje academic Blaže Ristovski seems to agree with this observation: he emphasizes that the "theories" (*teoriite*) of Macedonian identity evolved "outside Macedonia and without the participation of Macedonians" until the second half of the nineteenth century.²¹

In fact, during the first half of the same century, references to ancient Macedonia appeared in Ottoman *Bulgaria*. The equation of Illyrians, ancient Macedonians and Slavs, promoted by Dalmatian and other Slavic writers, was finally echoed in the first modern Bulgarian historical compilations. Through the Illyrian myth, Alexander the Great found a place in a new Slav-Bulgarian narrative. This appeared in the so-called *Zograph*

¹⁷ Dragan Taškovski, *Ragljanjeto na makedonskata nacija* (Skopje: Nova Makedonija, 1966), 168.

¹⁸ Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Skanderbeg: Der neue Alexander auf dem Balkan* (Regensburg: Pustet, 2009).

¹⁹ Nathalie Clayer, *Aux origines du nationalisme albanais. La naissance d'une nation majoritairement musulmane en Europe* (Paris: Karthala, 2007), 441, 528.

²⁰ Aleksandar Matkovski, *Makedonskiot polk vo Ukraina* (Skopje: Mislja, 1985).

²¹ Blaže Ristovski, *Makedonskiot narod i makedonskata nacija*, vol. 1 (Skopje: Mislja, 1983), 85.

History (1785) and in the *Short History of the Bulgarian Slavic People*, finished in 1792 by Spiridon, a monk from Gabrovo (central Bulgaria). Spiridon recycled the story about Alexander being astonished by the bravery of the Illyrians/Slavs and claimed that the famous ruler gave them (that is, the Bulgarians) his own motherland, Macedonia, as a present. The same legend, plus a translation of a Romanian version of the *Alexander Romance*, appeared in 1833 in a copy of Paisiy Hilendarski's *Slavic-Bulgarian History* (1762). The story about Alexander's precious gift can be found in other modern Bulgarian versions of the *Romance* as well: the translators were obviously convinced that the ancient Macedonians were ancestors of the modern ones, which meant that they were "Bulgarians."²²

Finally, the courageous Bulgarians who helped Alexander in his military campaigns reappeared in the 1850s in a work of the revolutionary Georgi Rakovski, author of quixotic theories about the Bulgarian ethnogenesis (which he placed in Vedic India). Even seventy years after Spiridon, one of the most important writers and publicists of the Bulgarian "Revival"—Petko Slaveykov—referred to Alexander as a Bulgarian ancestor.²³ In a sense, the name of his journal *Makedoniya* (1866–1872), the most popular Bulgarian periodical from that period, likewise represents a symbolic appropriation of the ancient Macedonian heritage.²⁴

Unfortunately, the legends about Bulgarians' ancient ancestry reached the international academic audience at a time when the direct link between Slavs and Balkan peoples from ancient times was seriously contested. This link was nevertheless reactivated by the Bosnian "Illyrian" activist Stefan Verković. The former Franciscan monk was particularly eager to find folkloric confirmations of the ancient history of the "Macedonian Bulgarians" and of their link to ancient Macedonians and Thracians. He did not have to wait long: Ivan Gologanov, a Bulgarian teacher from

²² They also equated the Persian enemies of the ancient king with the Turks: Nikolay Aretov, *Natsionalna mitologiya i natsionalna literatura* (Sofia: Kralitsa Mab, 2006), 124–127. The first printed Bulgarian translation of the *Romance* is *Istoriya na velikiy Aleksandra makedontsa* of Hristo Protopopovich Vasilev (native of Karlovo, central Bulgaria), published in 1844 in Belgrade. This Bulgarian "romance" of Alexander is indicated by the Macedonian historian Blaže Ristovski, "Aleksandar Makedonski vo istoriskata svest na makedonskite pisатели od XIX i XX vek," in *Portreti i procesi od makedonskata literaturna i nacionalna istorija*, vol. 1 (Skopje: Kultura, 1989), 217.

²³ Desislava Lilova, *Vāzrozhdenskite znacheniya na natsionalnoto ime* (Sofia: Prosveta, 2003), 201–227.

²⁴ Iliya Todev, "Edinstvoto na bălgarskite vāzrozhdenski protsesi v Miziya, Trakiya i Makedoniya," in *Natsionalno-osvoboditelnoto dvizhenie na makedonskite i trakiyskite bălgari 1878–1944*, vol. 1 (Sofia: MNI, 1994), 20.

eastern Macedonia, supplied him with “popular songs” on topics such as Orpheus, the Trojan War, Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great, which were published by Verković in two huge volumes bearing the title *The Slavic Veda*.²⁵

Soon, leading Western European, Russian and Bulgarian scholars demonstrated that the “Veda” was a mystification *à la* Macpherson’s poems of Ossian and that it was forged, as it seems, by the teacher Gologanov.²⁶ But more important from the point of view of development of collective identities is the fact that educated Bulgarians were already exploiting the references to antiquity as a means of national self-legitimation. In the late nineteenth century, the Illyrian myth was marginal in Habsburg Croatia itself, while in Ottoman Bulgaria it had limited success. But the reference to ancient Macedonia, employed by authors from Dalmatia several centuries ago, was reused by Bulgarian intellectuals to oppose a serious challenge: Hellenism.

*The Slavic “Revival” and the Greek Contributions to
Macedonian Nationalism*

Led by pan-Slavic ideals, Bosnian “Illyrian” Verković pursued an explicitly anti-Greek mission: he sought to reaffirm the Slavic identity in Ottoman Macedonia and thus to rescue it from Greek assimilation. This was already the agenda of nascent Bulgarian nationalism. From the outset, it attempted to counter Greek linguistic and cultural domination in scholarly and ecclesiastic matters. This domination was especially blamed on the Greek-speaking Constantinople Patriarchate.²⁷ From a symbolic point of view, Greek identity—with its “ancient roots”—was far superior. Thus the Bulgarian authors tried to back up their Slavic identity with the same credentials. Ironically, their turn to antiquity, which sought to match and even overtake the ancient Greek heritage, was made possible by their

²⁵ *Veda Slovena*, vol. 1 (Belgrade, 1874), and *Veda Slovenah*, vol. 2 (St. Petersburg, 1881).

²⁶ See the presentation of the debates by Gane Todorovski, “Za i protiv *Veda Slovena*,” *Godišen zbornik na Univerzitetot vo Skopje* 19 (1967).

²⁷ This was, however, not “Greek” in the nationalist terms of the Hellenic kingdom. While the Bulgarian national leaders eventually rejected it as a proselytizing Greek institution, even today’s Greek scholars tend to underestimate its own gradual engagement with the Greek cause. On the relations between Bulgarian nationalist intelligentsia and the Patriarchate, as well as on the Bulgarian-Greek cultural entanglements in the nineteenth century, see Roumen Daskalov’s contribution to the present volume.

Greek education. This was particularly true of Rakovski²⁸ and Gologanov. And, not surprisingly, the appropriation of the ancient historical heritage often characterized personalities from Macedonia, as the last case confirms.

In fact, during its early stages, modern Greek nationalism did not take a clear stance on the historical merit of Philip II and Alexander the Great. Between the 1790s and the 1840s, at least fourteen leading Greek intellectuals (among them such an important figure as Adamantios Korais) expressed the view that the Macedonians were conquerors of ancient Greece, that they were barbaric invaders and enemies of Hellenism.²⁹ However, Rigas Velestinlis (Feraios) was already a devoted admirer of Alexander and published a lithograph with a portrait of the famous ruler. Finally, through the authority of the father of modern Greek historiography—Constantine Paparrigopoulos—in the 1850s Alexander definitively entered the patriotic master narrative.³⁰ The ancient Macedonians not only were supposed to complete the historical continuity of the Greek people but also became a symbol of Greek national unity (Philip did not conquer but “united” the Hellenic *poleis*) and the epitome of Greek glory (Alexander was not a barbarian—he conquered the “barbaric world” and spread Hellenic civilization worldwide).

The ancient Macedonian heritage was introduced to the population of Ottoman Macedonia by the Greek schools, which were virtually the only Christian schools in the region in the first half of the nineteenth century. Just as in Bulgaria, a number of local intellectuals received their education in prestigious Greek high schools in the Ottoman Empire as well as in the Hellenic kingdom (in particular at the University of Athens, founded in 1837). As early as the 1840s, the Russian scholar Viktor Grigorovich was

²⁸ In the early 1840s, Rakovski was active in a “Macedonian” revolutionary society in Athens and used the pen name “Georgi Makedon.” During the first half of the nineteenth century, natives from various parts of today’s Bulgaria identified as “Macedonians.” Cf. Blaže Ristovski, *Stoletija na makedonskata svest* (Skopje: Kultura, 2001), 217–226. Because the boundaries of the “Macedonian” region were not clear until 1878 at least, natives from what is now considered to be “western Bulgaria” were called, and called themselves, “Macedonians”: for instance, Hristaki Pavlovich (1804–1848) from the town of Dupnitsa.

²⁹ Victor Roudometof, *Nationalism, Globalization and Orthodoxy: The Social Origins of Ethnic Conflict in the Balkans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 102. This fact is highlighted by Anastas Vangeli, “Antiquity Musing: Reflections on the Greco-Macedonian Symbolic Contest over the Narratives of the Ancient Past” (MA thesis, Central European University, Budapest, 2009), 36–37.

³⁰ Yannis Hamilakis, *The Nation and Its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology and National Imagination in Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 117; Roudometof, *Nationalism*, 108.

impressed by the popularity of the myth of Alexander the Great in Macedonia and in Bulgaria. At the same time, he noted that, unlike the legend of the Slavic hero Marko Kraljević (Krali Marko), which was “truly popular and omnipresent,” the memory of Alexander was inspired by education: those who spoke of him “were not able to explain his personality without referring to the *daskali* (teachers) who have books about him.”³¹

It was in this manner that “Macedonia” and its brave rulers became a Slavic myth in Macedonia—after having been an “Illyrian” and Greek myth. Since the 1850s the local Slavic intellectuals definitely began identifying themselves as “Macedonians,” and for contemporary Macedonian historiography, this is sufficient reason to include them in the narrative of the “Macedonian national revival.” However, it must be noted that during the Ottoman period, Slavs’ self-identification as Macedonian was, in most cases, not exclusive vis-à-vis other identities. It coexisted particularly well with Bulgarian self-identification. The expression “Macedonian Bulgarians” (*makedonski bugari/bolgari/bālgari*), frequently used by the local “revivalists” in order to categorize themselves, only confirms the Bulgarian historiographic thesis that the Macedonian identity was merely a regional one. The absence of a real opposition between the terms “Bulgarian” and “Macedonian” is confirmed by, for instance, the Ohrid teacher, journalist and ethnographer Kuzman Shapkarev/Šapkarev, an important figure in both Bulgarian and contemporary Macedonian historical narrative. His textbooks in local Slavic idiom are signed by “A Macedonian” (*Edin Make-donets*), but their language is declared to be “Bulgarian.”

Just as in the Greek case, initially, there were also some Slavic examples of reticence towards Macedonian-ness—this time, precisely because it was Greek. For instance, Konstantin Miladinov, the poet from Struga who had studied at the Greek High school in Ioannina and at the University of Athens, suggested that Macedonia should be called “western Bulgaria.” Obviously, he was aware that the classical designation was received via Greek schooling and culture.³² Nevertheless, the Slavic appropriation of ancient Macedonian imagery continued. Konstantin’s own brother—Dimitrija/Dimităr Miladinov—tried to convince a Greek teacher that not only Philip, Alexander and the ancient Macedonians were Slavs but also Homer, Demosthenes and Strabo. According to Rayko Zhinzifov/Rajko

³¹ Viktor Grigorovich, *Ocherk puteshestviya po Evropeyskoy Turtsiy* (Moscow, 1877).

³² The Macedonian historian Taškovski believes that the Macedonian Slavs initially rejected the Macedonian designation as Greek: Taškovski, *Ragjanjeto*, 120.

Žinzifov, poet and translator from Veles, Dimităr Miladinov almost “Slavicized” the contemporary Greeks as well.³³

There was certainly a process of “Slavicization” going on: Žinzifov was himself of Vlach (Aromanian) origin, and before becoming a Slavic-Bulgarian nationalist, he was—like most of the Macedonian Vlachs—a person with Greek cultural background. Other Macedonian-Bulgarian authors also believed that the Macedonians of Philip and Alexander were Slavs. Dimităr, a teacher from the region of Kayılar (now Ptolemaida in Greece) who had adopted the surname *Makedonski*, considered that the ancient Macedonians had not “sunk into the ground”: he was convinced that the Slavs of Macedonia were their descendants.³⁴

Often exploited (and selectively quoted) in Macedonian historiography, such sources are nevertheless of doubtful value for today’s Macedonian nationalism. Dimităr Makedonski actually insisted that the modern Macedonians were “pure Bulgarians” and not “Tzintzars” (Aromanians) or other people. Thus historical claims like those of Miladinov and Makedonski could be perfectly subsumed to the Bulgarian appropriation of the ancient past. However, there were also some Slavic Macedonian voices, documented in the late nineteenth century, that could not be.

The historians from Skopje refer in particular to an 1871 article published by Petko Slaveykov in his *Makedoniya*.³⁵ He describes the ideology of some “young patriots” whom he labels “Macedonists” (*makedonisti*)—without a doubt, this is the first instance of the derogatory term. According to Slaveykov, the “Macedonists” claimed they were “not Bulgarians but Macedonians, descendants of ancient Macedonians.” They believed they had “Macedonian blood,” and, at the same time, they were “pure Slavs”—in any case, different from the Bulgarians. These patriots even had ethno-racist stereotypes about the latter: for them, the Bulgarians were “Tatars.” In order to substantiate this thesis, they referred to the differences between the Macedonian and the (Upper-)Bulgarian (*gornebălgarsko*) dialects, the former being, in their opinion, closer to Old Slavonic, while the latter was “mixed with Tartarisms.” The same persons feared that the (Upper) Bulgarians held senior positions in the anti-Greek ecclesiastic and national struggle that had led in the meantime to the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate (1870). As “Macedonians” they were reportedly convinced

³³ Rayko Zhinzifov, “Dimitri i Konstantin Miladinovi,” *Den*, 1862.

³⁴ “Po makedonskiyt vāpros,” *Makedoniya*, February 16, 1871, published in *Bălgarski vāzrozhdenski knizhovnitsi ot Makedoniya. Izbrani stranitsi* (Sofia: BAN, 1983), 360–361.

³⁵ “Makedonskiyt vāpros,” *Makedoniya*, January 18, 1871.

that the Bulgarian Church would be as oppressive to the Slavic communes of Ottoman Macedonia, dealing with local ecclesiastic and scholarly matters, as the “Greek” Church.

The main points of the “Macedonists” underlined by Slaveykov are shockingly close to some of the beliefs and the agendas of today’s Macedonian nationalism. Among them are the idea that the contemporary Macedonians are descendants of both ancient Macedonians and Slavs, unlike the “Tatars” from Bulgaria; the praise of the Macedonian language as distinct from Bulgarian and closer to medieval Slavonic; and the emerging project of a separate Macedonian Church. Unfortunately, as Slaveykov did not mention names, it is difficult to say whom he had in mind specifically: the Macedonian scholars believe he referred to Kuzman Šapkarev or to Parteniy/Partenija Zografski (writer and cleric). A November 1870 article in the Bulgarian newspaper *Pravo* actually attributed to Šapkarev a complaint about the Bulgarian Church’s “domination,” similar to the one quoted by Slaveykov. So far, the data about his activity, as well as about Parteniy Zografski (who was bishop of the Bulgarian Exarchate), do not corroborate the “Macedonism” described in the article.

In any case, three years later, Slaveykov confirmed the existence of such Macedonian “nationalism.” Two letters of his from the beginning of 1874, addressed to the Bulgarian Exarch, described a “Macedonist” trend existing within the Church movement for union with Rome, in some parts of Macedonia at that time. Once again he referred to the frustration of Macedonians over the domination of (Upper) Bulgarians in Church matters as well as to their ethno-genetic myth of ancient Macedonia.³⁶ In fact, an anonymous article published in Slaveykov’s newspaper as early as June 1870 shared a similar point of view.³⁷ The author drew a distinction between his compatriots—“the Macedonians”—and “the Bulgarians” (*bălgarite*), and opposed the leading role of the latter in the national Church movement. The article nevertheless did not call for the establishment of a separate Macedonian Church: it finished with a passionate appeal for a democratic “synodal” Bulgarian Church, unlike the “despotic” decision-making deemed typical of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

The ecclesiastic “Macedonism” noted by Slaveykov in the 1870s seems enigmatic, but other sources confirm the first steps of Macedonian

³⁶ *Documents on the Struggle*, 237–242; cf. Tsocho Bilyarski and Iliya Paskov, “Pisma na Petko Rachev Slaveykov po uniyata v Makedoniya prez 1874 g.,” *Vekove* 1 (1989): 57–76.

³⁷ “Edin glas za vsichka Makedoniya,” *Makedoniya*, June 23, 1870.

nationalism. Macedonian historians often cite the case of a teacher at the Bulgarian school in Salonika at the end of the 1860s. A native of Ohrid, he claimed to be a “pure Macedonian”—just like Philip, Alexander and “the philosopher Aristotle”—and not Bulgarian, Greek or “Tzintzar” (Aromanian).³⁸ At the same time, Slavs faithful to the Patriarchate of Constantinople pretended to descend from Alexander the Great and opposed the Bulgarian identity.³⁹

The author who described the teacher’s reaction claimed that the teacher was indeed half-Aromanian, that he spoke only broken Slavic and that he had lived previously in Athens: these circumstances probably made it difficult for him to embrace Bulgarian nationalism. As far as the Patriarchist “descendants” of Alexander are concerned, they actually insisted they were “pure Greeks” who merely spoke Bulgarian (*bugarski*). They were referring to “the Greek books” according to which, once upon a time, the barbarians conquered Macedonia, took Greek women for wives and forbade them from speaking in Hellenic—causing the Greek language in Macedonia to perish.

Just as in this case, after 1870, the rejection, for one reason or another, of the Bulgarian Church affiliation went along with some ethnicization of Macedonian identity. In 1890–1892, the Exarchist bishop of Skopje Teodosij(a), brother of the forger of the Slavic “Veda” Ivan Gologanov, disobeyed the Exarch and tried to re-establish the Ohrid Archbishopric (abolished in 1767) as a separate Macedonian Church. Slaveykov as well as the critics of Teodosij believed that “Macedonism” was inspired by foreign, particularly Greek, propaganda. Its impact is undoubtedly visible in the stigmatization of the Bulgarians as “Tatars.”⁴⁰ And, in reality, Teodosij’s activity was favorably regarded by Greek propagandists.⁴¹

³⁸ Stefan Salgāndzhiev, *Lichni dela i spomeni po vāzrazhdaneto na Solunskite i Serski Bālgari* (Plovdiv, 1906), 35.

³⁹ See the memoirs of Nedelya Petkova, the first female Bulgarian teacher in Macedonia, and of her daughter Stanislava: Nedelya Petkova, *Spomeni* (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na OF, 1987), 42–44.

⁴⁰ In his letters to the Exarch, Slaveykov mentioned Greek (but also Serbian) propaganda activity, and his journal *Makedoniya* fought back against Greek and Serbian influence: Lilova, *Vāzrozhdenski*, 274. During the same period, certain Serbian authors recycled the Illyrian myth of the Slavic Macedonians as descendants of the ancient ones. One such author was Jovan Dragašević, professor at the Military Academy in Belgrade: Ristovski, “Aleksandar Makedonski vo istoriskata svest,” 221. The “Serbian context” of the Macedonian-Slavic identity building will be discussed further.

⁴¹ *Istorija na makedonskiot narod*, vol. 3 (Skopje: INI, 2003), 145–146.

Such data might suggest that the Greek-Slavic entanglement over things Macedonian was even more complicated. The Slavic reference to antiquity and the development of a Macedonian identity was more than just the ironic result of Greek education, an illegitimate appropriation of symbols in spite of Hellenic indoctrination. To a certain extent, that identity was also *encouraged* by Greek education. Here a closer look at the Greek context is necessary.

The Occidental cult of ancient Hellas, transferred to Greek soil, was certainly pivotal in the construction of modern Greek nationalism. Thanks to it, the very names *Romioi* and *Graikoi* used by Greek-speakers to identify themselves were replaced by the ethnonym *Hellenes/Ellines*. But the (re)naming with ancient terms also affected Greeks' Balkan neighbors as well as the non-Greek-speaking subjects of the newly founded Hellenic kingdom. In Greek imagery and "ethnic" terminology from the first half of the nineteenth century, the Balkans were still populated by "Thracians," "Macedonians," "Triballoi," and so on.

The Vlachs (Aromanians), whose presence was significant in Epirus, Thessaly and Macedonia, were quickly identified as descendants of the ancient Macedonians. Gradually, this thesis became practically official: even after World War II, Greek ethnographers continue to treat them as Romanized heirs of "Thracians, Macedonians and Thessalians."⁴² In the early nineteenth century, the term "Macedonians" was applied also to the *Arvanites*—Albanian-speaking Orthodox Christians inhabiting Attica, Euboea, the islands of the Saronic Gulf and some parts of the Peloponnesus—but also to Muslim Albanians and even to Turks.⁴³

Similarly, the Bulgarians, who were also quite prominent in the Greek imagination of the "northern lands," received ancient names and peculiar designations as "Thraco-Bulgarians." As the semantic reach of the term "Bulgarians" initially remained unclear, it was easily combined with other "ethnic" epithets. Furthermore, it was used to denote all kinds of Balkan Slavic (and perhaps not only Slavic) population. For instance, the famous Hadzhi Hristo "the Bulgarian" (Chatzichristos Voulgaris), one of the most important commanders of the Greek Revolution and leader of "Bulgarian" volunteers, was maybe a Serb from Belgrade. At the Constitutional Assembly of 1843, he represented the "Thraco-Serbo-Bulgarians"

⁴² Ioannis Koliopoulos, *Istoria tis Ellados apo to 1800. To ethnos, i politeia kai i koinonia ton Ellinon*, vol. 1 (Athens: Vaniias, 2000), 76–77.

⁴³ Vasilis Gounaris, "I Makedonia ton Ellinon: Apo to Diafotismo eos ton A' Pankosmio Polemo," in *Makedonikes tautotites*, 185–186.

(*Thrakoservovoulgaroi*). A bit later, in 1854, the revolutionaries led by the Greek-Macedonian *armatolos* Tsamis Karatasos in Chalkidiki were also characterized as “Thraco-Slavo-Bulgarians.”⁴⁴

Until roughly the mid-nineteenth century, just like all Balkan (and Anatolian) Christian Orthodox populations, the “Bulgarians” were regarded by Greeks as a more or less “Greek” population. Although in some cases their “barbarian” language was mocked and disdained, they were included as part of a bigger (imagined) pan-Hellenic family—similarly to the proximity of ancient Macedonians and Thracians to the Hellenes. The nascent Bulgarian nationalism was initially considered illegitimate secessionism and a manipulation of people’s misfortunes. The Greek view of the first Bulgarian nationalists actually greatly resembled the later Bulgarian perception of Macedonian nationalism. The Bulgarian national Church movement was presented as an affair of a bunch of “Bulgarists” (*Voulgaristai*): a concept visibly similar to the term “Macedonists” used by Slaveykov and by contemporary Bulgarian polemicists. Otherwise, the ordinary Bulgarian population was deemed Greek (*graikikos*), just like the Christian Albanians or the Vlachs.⁴⁵

However, the growth of the Bulgarian movement changed this idea radically. The Bulgarians were increasingly described as “Tatars,” “Tataro-Mongols,” “Mongolian tribe,” “Turano-Finns” or “brothers of the Huns.” This lexicon became common after the establishment of the Exarchate (1870) and its proclamation as schismatic by the Patriarchate of Constantinople (1872). By the end of the century, after the creation of a Bulgarian state (1878) and with Greek-Bulgarian competition over Macedonia underway, the Bulgarians were clearly stigmatized as a barbarian, brigandish, dirty people, “worse than the Turks,” the most savage of all, and their skulls were described as similar to those of the “cannibal tribes in Australia.”⁴⁶

On this background, the perception and the “scholarly” treatment of the Slavic population in Macedonia also evolved. Its members—initially “Bulgarian”—suddenly appeared to be “Bulgarians with Greek physiognomy,” different from “the Bulgarians across Haemus [today Stara Planina, or the Balkan Mountains].”⁴⁷ They were becoming more and more

⁴⁴ Ibid., 191–192.

⁴⁵ Vasilis Gounaris, *Ta Valkania ton Ellinon. Apo to Diafotismo eos ton A' Pankosmio Polemo* (Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2007), 260, 276–277.

⁴⁶ Gounaris, *Ta Valkania*, 259–263, 387, 492, 494, 590.

⁴⁷ Koliopoulos, *Istoria*, 78.

“Bulgarian by language” but Hellenic-Macedonian “in essence” and were categorized as “Bulgarian-speaking Hellenes” (*Ellines Voulgarophonoi*). The terms “Slav-speaking Hellenes” and simply “Slavs” soon followed, in order to avoid their association with the Bulgarians. Moreover, by the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, the same population was also frequently labeled “Slav-speaking Macedonians” (*Slavophonoi Makedones*) and even “Macedonians” (*Makedones*).

The general idea behind this usage of the term was that the ancient Macedonians—by definition Greeks—had been obliged by the Bulgarian invaders to learn their language. In support of this interpretation, the linguist Georgios Chatzidakis published the work *Are the Macedonians Bulgarians?* When speaking of the *Arvanites*, a local historian emphasized that they had been Albanized only linguistically; in terms of their origin, they had nothing to do with the Albanians—just like the Macedonians with the Bulgarians.⁴⁸

A curious development of this theory, based on frivolous etymologies, suggested that the Slavic Macedonian idiom was a “mixed language” (*meikti glossa*) that only *looked* Slavic. A number of Greek authors claimed that the Macedonian population spoke the language of ancient Macedonians, that is, some form of Greek, which was only superficially Slavicized. During the years of the “Macedonian Struggle” (*Makedonikos Agonas*, 1904–1908), when Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian bands clashed in Ottoman Macedonia, the theory of the “superficially” Slavic and “essentially” Greek/Macedonian language was supported by figures such as the archeologist and statesman Neoklis Kazazis and the teacher Konstantinos Tsioulkas.⁴⁹ Another author even labeled it simply as the “Macedonian language” and published a lecture on its origin. His conclusion was that its speakers were, of course, Macedonians—in the sense of ancient Macedonians.⁵⁰

Thus, from a certain point of view, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Greek nationalist discourse became intriguingly similar to that of

⁴⁸ Gounaris, *Ta Valkania*, 246–247.

⁴⁹ Konstantinos Tsioulkas, *Symbolai eis tin diglossian ton Makedonon ek synkriseos tis slavofanous makedonikis glossis pros tin Ellinikin* (Athens, 1907).

⁵⁰ D. Kondylis, *Peri katagogis tis Makedonikis glossis kai ton lalounton autin laon* (Athens, 1912); see Gounaris, “I Makedonia ton Ellinon,” 201–202. Many decades later the same thesis was reused by the Greek statesman Nikolaos Martis, former minister of Northern Greece. He states that the “Slavic dialect spoken in central and western Macedonia (Northern Greece) is an ancient Greek language. It contains 1164 Homeric words. Due to the long coexistence of Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians, this dialect has been enriched with Bulgarian words and endings . . .” (*Macedonia*, accessed June 25, 2011, <http://www.hri.org/Martis/contents/main8.html>).

modern Macedonia. In letters to his wife, Pavlos Melas, the most mythologized Greek fighter against the “Bulgarian” bands in Ottoman Macedonia (*makedonomachos*), simply called the local Slavs “Macedonians” without any epithets. Ironically, while the Greek ideology became more and more “Macedonist,” there were Slavic intellectuals (praised in modern Macedonian historiography) who were reticent about Macedonian identity: for them, it was still a “foreign product,” most likely Greek.

In 1888 Kuzman Šapkarev wrote: “The strangest (*chudno*) thing is the name ‘Macedonian,’ which has been imposed (*natrapiha*) on us from the outside and by no means by our own intelligentsia, as some people believe.” Šapkarev confirmed that the Macedonian Slavic peasants continued to refer to themselves as “Bulgars,” “even if they pronounced it incorrectly” (*bugari*), and that they called their idiom the “Bulgarian language” (*bugarski jazik*).⁵¹ Later, even Krste Misirkov, the leading Macedonian nationalist of the early twentieth century, did not pay any attention to ancient Macedonians in his writings.

In the meantime, Macedonian myth nevertheless also became part of local revolutionary propaganda. The figure of Alexander the Great appeared in two documents related to the ill-fated anti-Ottoman Kresna-Razlog uprising (1878–1879), which are often quoted by historians from Skopje.⁵² Shortly after, the ancient king, as well as Aristotle, reappeared in manifestos for the autonomy of Macedonia issued in 1880–1881 by a self-proclaimed “provisional government of Macedonia.”⁵³ The last fact is hardly surprising: the assembly that proclaimed the “government” was chaired by the Greek professional revolutionary (of Slavic Macedonian origin) Leonidas Voulgaris, supporter of the Greek-Serbian entente and of the idea of Eastern federation.⁵⁴

⁵¹ A letter of Šapkarev to Marin Drinov, frequently exploited by the Bulgarian polemist literature: see, e.g., Kosta Tsärmushanov, *Makedonizmăt i säprotivata na Makedoniya sreshu nego* (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo, 1992), 418. The form *Bugari*, used by the Slav-speakers of Ottoman Macedonia, is actually closer to the Serbian pronunciation of the ethnonym “Bulgars” than to the standard Bulgarian (*bălgari*).

⁵² *Documents on the Struggle*, 267–284. However, the historians from Sofia contest their authenticity: Hristo Hristov, “Po sledite na edna istoriko-dokumentalna falshifikatsiya,” *Istoricheski pregled* 4 (1983).

⁵³ *Documents on the Struggle*, 289–292.

⁵⁴ Referring to this fact, the Bulgarian authors consider the assembly of Voulgaris to be Greek-inspired: Kiril Patriarh Bălgarski, *Bălgarskata ekzarhiya v Odrinsko i Makedoniya sled Osvoboditelnata vojna (1877–1878)*, vol. 1/1 (Sofia: Sinodalno izdatelstvo, 1969), 461–466, 485. Tsamis Karatasos already referred to the bravery of the ancient Macedonians in his proclamations: Gounaris, “I Makedonia ton Ellinon,” 192.

In some cases, the reference to ancient Macedonia is undoubtedly a result of Greek propagandist inspiration. The most representative example in this regard is the dissemination in 1907 of a "prophecy" of Alexander the Great written in Slavic Macedonian dialect but printed with Greek characters.⁵⁵ According to the publication, the local Slav-speakers were descendants of the ancient Macedonians, meaning the Hellenes, while the Bulgarians represented their worst enemy. Greek activists also circulated manifestos directed at their "Macedonian brothers" to convince them that their language and origin had nothing to do with those of the Bulgarians.⁵⁶

But activists who embraced Bulgarian nationalism and even lived in Bulgaria also took inspiration from ancient Macedonia. Alexander the Great was proclaimed "pride of the nation" (*natsionalna gordost*) by Kosta Shahov, a native of Ohrid, a journalist in the newly created Balkan state and one of the initiators of Macedonian revolutionary activity on its soil.⁵⁷ Philip and Alexander were already mentioned on the first pages of the first issue of the journal *Loza*, published between 1892 and 1894 in Sofia by a group of young patriots. Although they used a language containing some particular Macedonian Slavic characteristics and were accused, by the governmental press, of a "Macedonist" secessionism, their future activity did not leave the impression of being Macedonian nationalist. Later they become revolutionaries from the famous Internal Organization but also from its collaborator and rival—the "external" Supreme Macedonian Committee in Sofia—as well as Bulgarian politicians and scholars.

The same is true of other Bulgarian nationalists from Macedonia. In 1902, in a manifesto issued during the so-called Gorna Dzhumaya uprising (a series of attacks organized by bands of the Supreme Committee), the Bulgarian colonel Anastas Yankov, a native of Zagoričani (today Vasileiada, Greece), referred to Alexander the Great as well as to medieval Slavic figures from Macedonia.⁵⁸ These were obviously already part of a repertoire

⁵⁵ *Preskasanie na Gkolem Alexantr*, ed. Athanasios Souliotis-Nikolaidis. See his memoirs *O Makedonikos Agon. I "Organosis Thessalonikis" 1906–1908. Apomnimoneumata* (Thessaloniki: IMXA, 1993).

⁵⁶ For instance, *Proklamatsia na Ellinomakentonski Komitet ot Atina. Za nasite mprate Makentontsi*, quoted by Christian Voss, "Verschriftungsversuche des Ägäis-Makedonischen im 20. Jahrhundert," *Zeitschrift für Slavistik* 48 (2003); Voss, "Sprachdiskurse in minoritären Ethnisierungs- und Nationalisierungsprozessen. Die slavischsprachige Minderheit in Griechenland," *Südosteuropa* 52 (2003).

⁵⁷ See his newspaper *Makedoniya*, November 11, 1888, and March 17, 1889.

⁵⁸ Blaže Ristovski, *Istorija na makedonskata nacija* (Skopje: MANU, 1999), 207.

of a specific “local Macedonian” patriotism. The latter was described at the beginning of the twentieth century by foreign observers such as Henry Noel Brailsford and Allen Upward. They likewise noted the legend that Alexander and Aristotle were “Bulgarians.”⁵⁹

Obviously, by the late Ottoman period, the ancient glory of the region was exploited for self-legitimation by groups with different loyalties—Greek as well as Bulgarian. It was also generating a new identity that, during that period, was still not necessarily exclusive vis-à-vis Greek or Bulgarian national belonging. Upward remarked that Slav-speaking Patriarchists preferred to characterize their native tongue as Macedonian (*makedonski*): a curious change from the late 1860s, when they still admitted it was *bugarski*.⁶⁰

As is well-known, the biggest part of Ottoman “geographic Macedonia” was annexed by Greece after the Balkan Wars and World War I. This also meant the incorporation of a considerable part of the Macedonian Slav-speaking population. The short-lived Protocol of Politis-Kalfov (1924) recognized it as a “Bulgarian minority,” but the document was never ratified by the Parliament in Athens, where it provoked a scandal. The politically correct identity of this population became simply “Slavophone” or, again, “Slav-Macedonian”/“Macedonian Slavic.” For instance, the Greek census of 1928 registered people speaking “Macedono-Slavic” (*makedonoslauiki*). This stance on Macedonian Slavs’ identity was confirmed by 1925, when, to prove that Greece ensured the “fair treatment” of national minorities, the Ministry of Education in Athens prepared an elementary textbook called *Abecedar*. It was written in the dialect of the area of Florina in western Greek Macedonia and was intended for use by the schools in the region. The publication provoked the furious reaction of Sofia, as well as of Belgrade, which saw it as a clear attempt to denationalize the “Bulgarian” (respectively, the “Serbian”) minority in Northern Greece.

Intriguingly, modern Macedonian historiography holds that, with the *Abecedar*, Athens recognized the Macedonian national identity of the local Slavs.⁶¹ In 2006 the primer was republished and publicly promoted by the political party *Vinožito* (*Ouranio Toxo*), representing the Macedonian minority in Greece. However, at least one non-negligible aspect

⁵⁹ Henry N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future* (London: Methuen and Co., 1906), 103, 105, 121–122; Allen Upward, *The East End of Europe* (London: John Murray, 1908), 163.

⁶⁰ Upward, *The East End*, 204. Cf. Nedelya Petkova’s memoirs quoted above.

⁶¹ Such as Ristovski, *Istorija*, 686.

of the textbook indicates its “ethno-engineering” intent: it was edited in *Latin* characters, going against all written tradition among Macedonian Slavs. Just as the Bulgarian critics understood, setting aside Cyrillic script meant promoting a Slavic Macedonian identity disinherited of its own cultural and historical basis. Far from recognizing anything, Greek authorities were instead anxious to neutralize the Bulgarian influence over the Slav-speakers. Finally, *volens nolens*, the latter indicated their opposition to the introduction of the primer and declared: “We confirm our decision to support until death our fathers’ institutions and the pure Greek tradition of Alexander the Great.”⁶² Since the failure of the *Abecedar*, Greece’s Slavs were supposed to adhere to Greek identity and thus to become the proud descendants of . . . ancient Macedonians.

A number of aspects of the Greek-Macedonian entanglement are surely ironic. Many of the stances taken since the nineteenth century by Greek political actors (including the government in Athens) could be heartily supported by Macedonians today. The encouragement of a separate (Slavic-)Macedonian identity (albeit Hellenic “in essence”), the propagation of the myth of ancient Macedonia and of its legendary kings Philip and Alexander, and the demonization of the “Tatar” Bulgarians are some of the points where the distance between Greek and contemporary Macedonian nationalism seems extremely short.

Here one must certainly add the national policy of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), which in 1924 called for the formation of a Macedonian (and a Thracian) state, albeit in the framework of a Balkan Soviet federation.⁶³ In 1935, KKE adopted the slogan of full equality of all national minorities in the framework of the existing Greek state, thus confirming the recognition of a separate Slav-Macedonian (*slavomakedonikos*) or even Macedonian people (*makedonikos laos*). The agenda of the Greek communists did not necessarily mesh with the Macedonian nationalism supported by Tito’s partisan movement in Yugoslavia. However, they tolerated and encouraged the political involvement of the (Slav-)Macedonians in World War II, and even more so in the Greek Civil War (1946–1949).⁶⁴

⁶² A case in Amyntaion (Sorovič) in February 1926: Iakovos Michailidis, “Minority Rights and Educational Problems in Greek Interwar Macedonia: The Case of the Primer ‘Abecedar,’” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 14 (1996).

⁶³ On the formulation of KKE’s Macedonian policy: Alexandros Dagkas and Giorgos Leontiadis, *Komintern kai Makedoniko zitima. To Elliniko paraskinio, 1924* (Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2008).

⁶⁴ Evangelos Kofos, *The Impact of the Macedonian Question on Civil Conflict in Greece (1943–1949)* (Athens: Hellenic Foundation for Defense and Foreign Policy, 1989); John

In January 1949 the Fifth Plenum of the Central Committee of the KKE went further: it recognized the right of the Macedonians to secede from Greece. But these events certainly must be examined in a wider international context.

*The Macedonian Revolutionary Movement and the Bulgarian
Contributions to Macedonian Nationalism*

Today, some Greek historians believe that Greece's strategies of symbolic or real "de-Bulgarization" (*apovoulgarismos*) of the Macedonian Slavs have contributed to the formation "of a new nation to the north of Greece."⁶⁵ However, it could be argued that, in some respects, certain political calculations of the Bulgarian state, as well as Bulgarian nationalism inside Macedonia, have also left their imprint on the development of modern Macedonian nationalism. If the common denominators of the Greek-Macedonian *histoire croisée* are the names "Macedonia" and "Macedonians" as well as the reference to the country's ancient glory, the Bulgarian-Macedonian entanglement has at least three aspects. These are, briefly, the idea of "geographic Macedonia," a number of historical references to figures and events from the Middle Ages and the Ottoman period until 1878, and above all, the tradition of the Macedonian revolutionary movement that developed thereafter.

The Macedonian pantheon of medieval "intellectuals" and rulers—Cyril and Methodius, their disciples Clement (Kliment) and Naum, Tsar Samuel (reigned 997–1014)—is clearly derived from the historiographic vulgate diffused by the Bulgarian literature and schools in Macedonia at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. The same is true of the cult to nineteenth-century enlighteners, like the aforementioned Miladinov brothers, Kuzman Šapkarev and Rajko Žinzifov.⁶⁶ It must be recalled that most of the Macedonian Slavic intelligentsia from the late Ottoman period was schooled in Bulgarian educational institutions

Koliopoulos, *Plundered Loyalties: World War II and Civil War in Greek West Macedonia* (New York: New York University Press, 1999) (for the Greek point of view); Andrew Rossos, "Incompatible Allies: Greek Communism and Macedonian Nationalism in the Civil War in Greece 1943–1949," *Journal of Modern History* 3 (1997) (for the Macedonian point of view).

⁶⁵ Koliopoulos, *Istoria*, 78.

⁶⁶ This thesis is accepted by the Macedonian historian Ristovski, at least concerning the pantheon of the nineteenth-century "Revival era" activists: Ristovski, *Makedonskiot narod i makedonskata nacija*, vol. 1 (Skopje: Mislja, 1983), 169.

operating both in the region and in the Bulgarian state. The historical personalities from the Middle Ages and after were certainly presented by Sofia as heroes and martyrs of Macedonia's "Bulgarianness." Hence, their "ethnic" characteristic was in a sense "reformulated" by modern Macedonian historical narrative.

The glorification of Macedonian revolutionary leaders from the end of Ottoman rule began—due to obvious circumstances—only in the inter-war period, but once again in Bulgaria. As we shall see later, Macedonian historiography has inherited a narrative about the local national-liberation movement that appeared in Bulgarian context. Yet, in the latter case, there is a more intriguing problem: one must analyze, beyond the historiographic narratives and interpretations, if and to what extent the rhetoric and the ideology of the local revolutionary movement "really" contributed to the development of a Macedonian *national* ideology.

As already mentioned, at least until the Congress of Berlin (1878), the geographic boundaries of "Macedonia" were not clear. Within the Ottoman Empire there was not a distinct administrative entity bearing this name. Therefore various territories of the Balkans were seen as "Macedonian." For instance, the first geographic map in Bulgarian (1843) assigned to Macedonia parts of what is now western Bulgaria (Radomir, Dupnitsa, Kyustendil), southern Serbia (Bosilegrad, Vranje) and Albania (Korçë) yet excluded from it Ohrid, Struga and Debar/Dibër. The map of "geographic Macedonia" become "clearer" only after the creation of the Bulgarian Principality and of the short-lived Eastern Rumelia at the Congress of Berlin. Equally important was the delineation of the new southern Serbian boundary by this international summit. The attribution of certain areas such as Kyustendil or Vranje to the Balkan states excluded them from "Macedonia" for good. Thus the region was soon identified with parts of three Ottoman administrative units (*vilayets*): Kosova (with Üsküb/Skopje as a capital), Manastir (Bitola/Monastiri) and Selânik (Salonika/Thessaloniki/Solun). *Grosso modo*, the territory in question appeared on maps such as those of the Greek Kleanthis Nikolaidis and of the Serbian Spiridon Gopčević (both in 1899). However, they also added districts that are not seen as Macedonian today from a Macedonian point of view and excluded others that are today claimed as Macedonian.

In fact, the "canonical" mapping of Macedonia was finally set, and popularized, by the ethnographic map of Vasil Kănchov (1900).⁶⁷ The

⁶⁷ Vasil Kănchov, *Makedoniya. Etnografiya i statistika* (Sofia, 1900).

author—a Bulgarian geographer, historian and politician—produced the image of the spatial boundaries of Macedonia which both Bulgarian and Macedonian nationalism accept today. By the end of the Ottoman period, Greece and Serbia promoted other cartographic representations where the northern regions around Skopje—today the Macedonian capital—were excluded from Macedonia.⁶⁸ According to Belgrade's point of view, they were part of "Old Serbia" (*Stara Srbija*). Partly because of lack of geopolitical interest and, to a certain extent, for the sake of "brotherly" compromise, Greece accepted the legitimacy of the Serbian claims. Even today, Athens refuses to recognize the former Yugoslav republic as "Macedonia." In the traditional Greek account, only the southernmost parts of the country designated today as "FYROM" (around Bitola, Gevgelija and Strumica—towns with pro-Greek Christian majorities on the eve of the Balkan wars) could be considered "Macedonia."

The same holds true for the imagination of the "ethnic contents" of the disputed territory. The Bulgarian Kănchov believed that Macedonia was inhabited by 1,181,336 "Bulgarians," making up 52 percent of its total population. The Macedonian historians seem to agree entirely with these data—they merely change the ethnic designation from "Bulgarians" to "Macedonians."⁶⁹ At the same time, Greek and Serbian statistics from the turn of the twentieth century suggest other numbers and percentages that are not accepted as credible either in Sofia or in Skopje. The consensus of the latter with regard to the map of Macedonia and to the "share" of the different ethnic groups a century ago is not accidental. These are the two aspects of an ideological construction that was propagated both by the scholars of Sofia and by the revolutionary movement in Macedonia. This construction took shape after the Congress of Berlin, in the intricate international context of the "Macedonian question."

Since the 1880s diverse national-liberation agendas crystallized within the Macedonian political organizations in Bulgaria and inside Ottoman Macedonia. The first scenario—the unification of the whole region of

⁶⁸ On the mapping of Macedonia: Henry Wilkinson, *Maps and Politics: A Review of the Ethnographic Cartography of Macedonia* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1951). On the boundaries of Macedonia according to Bulgarian and Serbian textbooks between 1878 and 1912, see Naum Kaychev, *Makedoniyo vǎzzhelana . . . Armiyata, uchilishteto i gradezhăt na natsiyata v Sărbija i Bălgariya (1878–1912)* (Sofia: Paradigma, 2003), 147–168.

⁶⁹ See, *pars pro toto*, Manol Pandevski, *Nacionalnoto prašanje vo makedonskoto osloboditelno dvizhenje (1893–1903)* (Skopje: Kultura, 1974), 41; Stojan Kiselinovski, *Egejskiot del na Makedonija (1913–1989)* (Skopje: Kultura, 1990), 8–11; Ivan Katardžiev, *Makedonija sto godini po Ilindenskoto vostanie* (Skopje: Kultura, 2003), 48.

Macedonia with the “liberated” Bulgarian Principality—was hardly feasible given the international opposition. The alternative option seemed more plausible: it advocated the creation of an “autonomous Macedonia” within the Ottoman Empire. According to one of the long-term projects developed by Macedonian militants, the region’s autonomous status was to serve as a first step towards its eventual unification with Bulgaria. This idea seemed a bit more realistic after the successful precedent of 1885 when, despite the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin, Eastern Rumelia was united with the Bulgarian Principality. According to another sub-version of the pro-autonomy agenda, the formation of a Macedonian polity was to serve as a link for the establishment of a “Balkan federation.”

Regardless of the long-term task envisaged, in the context of the pro-autonomy ideology, local activists developed a peculiar kind of Macedonian “supranational” identity: under the rubric of “Macedonians,” they tried to unite all the “national elements” of Macedonia for the sake of its political “liberation.” The first formulations of this identity appear as early as the end of the 1880s.⁷⁰ But it became politically significant after 1893 when six activists founded in Salonika the famous Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization. In a few years, this organization became an important internal and even international political factor of the Macedonian question. In the long term, it was transformed into one of the basic national “myths” claimed by both Bulgarian and Macedonian nationalism.

According to Bulgarian historians, as well as Macedonian specialists like Ivan Katardžiev, the organization initially bore the name “Bulgarian Macedono-Adrianopolitan Revolutionary Committees” (BMORK) but later abandoned this designation in favor of “Secret Macedono-Adrianopolitan Revolutionary Organization” (TMORO).⁷¹ The TMORO statute was

⁷⁰ See the anonymous article “Mnenie za reshavanie Makedonskiya vāpros,” *Makedoniya*, August 19, 1889. The author calls for the entire population of the region to struggle independently against Ottoman domination. For this task, he recommends the use of the common denominator “Macedonians” (*makedontsi*) for all the ethnic and confessional communities of the region. “We, the Macedonians” (*nie makedontsite*), the anonymous activist stresses, should not seek any unification whatsoever with a neighbor state, as the other neighbors would also try to seize territory they claimed, and Macedonia would be torn apart. Regardless of their nationality (*narodnost*)—be they “Bulgarians, Turks, Vlachs, etc.”—all Macedonians have “the same interests” and should work for the political liberty of their “land.”

⁷¹ Ivan Katardžiev, “Nekoi prašanja za ustavite i pravilnicite na VMRO do Ilindenskoto vostanie,” *Glasnik na Institutot za nacionalna istorija* 1 (1961). This interpretation is accepted by Pandeovski, *Nacionalno prašanje*.

clearly supranational. It granted the right of membership in the organization to every “Macedonian or Adrianopolitan”: the document appeals for the unification of all the “unsatisfied elements,” both in Macedonia and in the *vilayet* of Adrianople, regardless of their nationality (*narodnost*). The general political objective was declared to be the “complete political autonomy” of the two regions.⁷²

The “Adrianopolitan” part of the organization’s name indicates that its agenda concerned not only Macedonia but also Thrace—a region whose Bulgarian population is by no means claimed by Macedonian nationalists today. In fact, as the organization’s initial name shows, it had a Bulgarian national character: the revolutionary leaders were quite often teachers from the Bulgarian schools in Macedonia. This was the case of founders of the organization like the famous Dame Gruev, and also of the most venerated Macedonian hero—Goce Delčev/Gotse Delchev. Their organization was popularly seen in the local context as “the Bulgarian committee(s).”⁷³ However, due to differences in strategy, soon after its creation, the Internal Organization entered into competition and even in armed struggle with activists closely associated with the Bulgarian Church (Exarchate) and Principality.⁷⁴ Today’s Macedonian historiography emphasizes the conflicts with the Sofia-based Supreme Macedonian/Macedono-Adrianopolitan Committee, founded in 1895. In the context of these controversies, activists of the Internal Organization offered a more coherent declaration of their (supra-)national ideology.

In a June 1902 article,⁷⁵ the revolutionaries promoted the slogan “Macedonia for the Macedonians” (*Makedoniya za makedontsite*). The slogan was said to express the principle of “political separatism.” From its very beginning, the text clearly stated the meaning of this concept: it was a question of the separation of Macedonia vis-à-vis “the idea of Greater Bulgaria, or Greater Serbia, or Greater Greece.” The concrete stakes of this agenda were also explained: Macedonia was endangered by “greater or smaller states.” While the “small states of the Balkan peninsula” could not

⁷² *Documents on the Struggle*, 360–362.

⁷³ Ristovski, *Stoletija*, 51, 53.

⁷⁴ See Vardarski (Petăr Poparsov), *Stambolovshinata v Makedoniya i neynite predstaviteli* (Vienna, 1894). In fact, the writing was published in Sofia.

⁷⁵ “Politicheski separatizâm,” *Pravo*, June 7, 1902. Edited by the Macedonian activists Nikola Naumov and Toma Karayovov, the newspaper *Pravo* was the unofficial tribune of the Internal Organization. See *Macedonia: Documents and Materials* (Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History, Bulgarian Language Institute, 1979), 456–459.

solve the Macedonian question, they only sought territorial expansion, which would result in the partitioning of geographic Macedonia. "Greeks" and "Serbs" were directly accused of such ambitions. However, the Bulgarian Principality was also condemned for exploiting "unhappy Macedonia" in favor of ephemeral political interests.

The article promoted a supranational political loyalty: it called for all peoples inhabiting Macedonia to unite in the interest of achieving autonomous status for the region. The text also identified the long-term purpose of Macedonian autonomy: it had the "higher goal" of the eventual establishment of a Balkan confederation.

At the same time, the Macedonian revolutionaries declared their conviction that the majority of Macedonia's Christian population was "Bulgarian." Although advocating "political separatism," they clearly rejected possible allegations of what they labeled "national separatism," meaning the idea that the Macedonians constituted a nationality distinct from the Bulgarians. The text suggested that the integrity of the region implied the preservation of the "national unity of the Bulgarian tribe." Perhaps paradoxically, the achievement of autonomous, politically separate Macedonia was seen as the guarantee that the Bulgarians would preserve their identity. According to the authors, any other political scenario—in particular the plan of Greater Bulgaria—entailed the risk that parts of the "Bulgarian tribe" would fall under Greek, Serbian or other domination: it was clear that, just like Sofia, Belgrade and Athens would not give up their territorial ambitions.

Thus the separatist program of the Internal Organization's activists may leave the impression that, in their view, autonomous Macedonia was a contingent solution, imposed by the international setting. Nevertheless, the organization promoted a separate political loyalty, different from the one to the Bulgarian state. This "Macedonian" loyalty was particularly emphasized in leftist political discourse. The Macedonian socialists and anarchists had already gone even further in distancing themselves from mainstream Bulgarian nationalism. The socialist newspaper *Politicheska svoboda* (Political Liberty) severely criticized Bulgaria for its ambitions of territorial expansion in the region and called for the creation of an independent "federative Macedonian republic." Conceived as a kind of "Balkan Switzerland," independent Macedonia was to serve as the basis for another, broader federation—again, that of all the Balkan peoples. The socialists labeled national ambitions "stupid chauvinism and patriotism," especially "Bulgarian chauvinism," and countered that the "Macedonian"

(*makedonetsät*) should by no means be regarded as a Bulgarian, Serb or Greek, as he was, above all, a political “slave” (*rob*).⁷⁶ In some articles of the newspaper (as well as in party documents of the Macedonian socialist group), the term “Macedonian people” (*makedonski narod*) is contrasted with the “Bulgarian people” (*bălgarski narod*).⁷⁷

The socialists had little support in Macedonia, but some of them held important positions in the Internal Organization. After the disastrous anti-Ottoman Ilinden uprising (August 1903), provoked by the organization, its ideology turned decisively to the left. The general congress of 1905 (known as the “Rila Congress”) changed its name to VMORO (“Internal Macedono-Adrianopolitan Revolutionary Organization”). It also adopted a new statute that reasserted the supranational line⁷⁸ and confirmed the ideology of “political separatism”: the organization opposed the territorial aspirations of Balkan states vis-à-vis Macedonia and Adrianopolitan Thrace. Furthermore, the revolutionaries also declared their intention to counter the activities of the Bulgarian Exarchate “that are led in the spirit of Bulgarian state nationalism.”⁷⁹ The activists of the revolutionary departments of Serres, Strumica and Salonika took pains to stipulate that the Macedonian question could not be solved if it was formulated as a Bulgarian national question.

In this manner, the policy of Sofia was completely identified with the adversary policies of Athens and Belgrade: Bulgaria was clearly treated by the Serres activists as a foreign, hostile force.⁸⁰ Their leader Jane/Yane Sandanski condemned what he called “Bulgarian imperialism.” According to him, the Macedonians had to emancipate themselves as a “self-determining people.”⁸¹ Sandanski distanced himself even further from Sofia after the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, when he collaborated with the Committee of Union and Progress. In a special manifesto, issued in the initial days of the revolution, the Serres leader called on his compatriots to

⁷⁶ *Politicheska svoboda*, April 19, 1899.

⁷⁷ For instance, according to one conspicuous expression, “the Bulgarians” were “close in every respect” to “the Macedonian people,” which actually asserts a distinction between these two categories. See *Politicheska svoboda*, April 19, 1898, 2, 5.

⁷⁸ It stated that “anyone” from “European Turkey” could join the organization, regardless of “sex, religion, nationality or creed [*ubezhdenie*—that is, partisan orientation].”

⁷⁹ Hristo Silyanov, *Osvoboditelnite borbi na Makedoniya*, vol. 2 (Sofia: Izdanie na Ilin-denskata organizatsiya, 1943), 393–394.

⁸⁰ *Natsionalno-osvoboditelnoto dvizhenie na makedonskite i trakiyskite bălgari 1878–1944*, vol. 3 (Sofia: MNI, 1997), 67–68.

⁸¹ Silyanov, *Osvoboditelnite*, 498.

discard the propaganda of official Bulgaria in order to live together peacefully with the “Turkish people.”⁸²

Given such “anti-Bulgarian” statements, it is hardly surprising that today, Macedonian historiography refers to cases like Sandanski in order to demonstrate the existence of Macedonian nationalism within the local revolutionary movement, especially in its left wing. It is nevertheless doubtful that Sandanski and the other leftists of this period developed Macedonian nationalism *stricto sensu*. During the constitutional regime established by the Young Turks, Sandanski and his followers set up a “People’s Federative Party” that was supposed to include a number of ethnic sections, each one representing a distinct “nationality” of Macedonia. Its agenda expressed the federalist views of the revolutionary left wing that addressed all the national and confessional communities of “European Turkey.” The federalist project, however, failed and the only section that existed within the “People’s Federative Party” was the group of Sandanski himself—but it was officially called the “Bulgarian section.”⁸³

The existence of divergent evaluations—Bulgarian and ethnic Macedonian—of the revolutionary movement from the late Ottoman period shows how deeply intertwined Macedonian nationalism was in its initial phases with its Bulgarian counterpart. Contrary to the assertions of Skopje’s historiography, Macedonian revolutionaries clearly manifested Bulgarian national identity. Their Macedonian autonomism and “separatism” represented a strictly supranational project, not national. Yet contrary to the historiographic interpretation dominant in Sofia, the pro-autonomy revolutionary tradition undoubtedly contributed to the formation of contemporary Macedonian nationalism.

As early as 1903, the anarchist Pavel Shatev/Šatev, future participant in (and victim of) the Yugoslav Macedonian state leadership, witnessed a curious process of ethno-national differentiation. In Salonika’s Yedikule prison, some people he met felt they were “only Bulgarians”; others stated that, while they were Bulgarians by “nationality,” they felt they were, above all, Macedonians.⁸⁴ The loyalty to “unhappy Macedonia,” the identification with the region’s “own interests” and the idea that they have absolute priority: these were the main points of the revolutionary

⁸² Fikret Adanir, *Makedonskiyat vāpros* (Sofia: Amicitia, 2002), 258.

⁸³ Moreover, within the Ottoman parliament, Sandanski’s faction advocated the particular interests of the “Bulgarian nationality” in the Empire: *Macedonia: Documents and Materials*, 566–571.

⁸⁴ Pavel Shatev, *V Makedoniya pod robstvo* (Sofia, 1934), 319.

propaganda. And, albeit rarely, leaders of the revolutionary movement expressed unusual ideas about the nationality of Macedonia's Slavs. Anastas Yankov, Bulgarian colonel and activist of Sofia's Supreme Committee, mentions in his memoirs how, in an attempt to convince a Serbian captain of the need for Macedonian autonomy, he opposed the latter's assertions that a Macedonian Slavic nationality never existed in history.⁸⁵

As this example shows, even if they were Bulgarians by national self-identification and supranationalists as a political theory, with their propaganda of "Macedonia to the Macedonians," the revolutionaries promoted a concurrent political loyalty that generated new symbolic boundaries and also, in this manner and in certain contexts, transformations of the sense of ethnicity. They undoubtedly created some of the premises that the specific political setting after World War I transformed into identity patterns that could certainly be qualified as Macedonian nationalism.

Above all, the specific political climate after 1918 modified the semantics of the ambiguous notion of Macedonian "autonomy." It clearly acquired the meaning of independence, as the region was no longer "geographically intact" but divided among three Balkan states. This semantic shift happened in Bulgaria because, after the war, most of the Macedonian freedom fighters were concentrated there. They left the territories reoccupied by Belgrade and Athens. There was a good reason for that: during the Balkan wars and World War I, they sided with Sofia. But by the end of 1918, the same revolutionaries, especially the leftists, quickly distanced themselves from the defeated state. In this manner, they tried to "save" the parts of Macedonia occupied by the victorious Serbia and Greece: the activists imagined that the proclamation of a distinct Macedonian state would prevent the second partitioning of the region since 1913.

For this reason, starting in 1919, the leftist publications relaunched the program of "political separatism." Gjorče/Gyorche Petrov, leader of the left wing of the Internal Organization since the post-Ilinden period, affirmed that Macedonia represented a "distinct moral unit" (*otdelna moralna*

⁸⁵ He indicated as a historical "proof" of the existence of Macedonian nationality the medieval state of Samuil: Iva Burilkova and Tsocho Bilyarski, eds., *Ot Sofiya do Kostur. Spomeni* (Sofia: Sineva, 2003), 155. According to some sources, Boris Sarafov—leader of both the Supreme Committee and the Internal organization—once declared that the Macedonians were a distinct "national element": "The Macedonian Agitation," *The Times*, April 12, 1901; "Nouvelles d'Orient," *Pro Armenia*, April 25, 1901. Both newspapers refer to an interview with Sarafov in the Viennese newspaper *Die Information*.

edinitsa) with its own “ideology” and “aspirations.”⁸⁶ Nikola Pushkarov, former commander of the Skopje-area revolutionaries, went even further. He not only called for the establishment of an independent Macedonian state but also hoped that it would enable the evolution of the Macedonian population (*makedonsko naselenie*, *makedonski narod*) into a distinct nation (*natsiya*). For him, it was only after such national emancipation that “the Macedonian” would cease to be the victim of “the Greek, the Serbian or the Bulgarian.”⁸⁷ Thus, Pushkarov—who, paradoxically, had no Macedonian origins of his own (this was also true, incidentally, of a number of other staunch pro-autonomy figures from the Internal Organization)—seems to be the first one to attribute some national meaning to the supra-national Macedonian identity propagated by the revolutionary movement since the late Ottoman period.

However, initially the Macedonian leftists continued to identify, from the ethnic point of view, as Bulgarians. While advocating the “autonomy” of his homeland, the socialist Dimo Hadzhidimov recognized that this political idea was Bulgarian (*ideya bălgarska*), that is, that Macedonian autonomy was a program launched by the “Bulgarian element” (*bălgarskiya element*) in Macedonia.⁸⁸ Just like the authors of the concept of “political separatism,” Hadzhidimov was convinced that the “Macedonian Bulgarians” (whom he saw as “half of the Bulgarian tribe”) should exist politically outside Bulgaria and together with the other “nationalities” of Macedonia. This was clearly a scenario deemed better than the partition of the biggest part of the “geographical region” and of the “Bulgarians” living in it between Serbia and Greece. But the same scenario surely promoted an identity that was becoming more and more “Macedonian.”

In the autumn of 1920, a group of activists began publishing the newspaper *Avtonomna Makedoniya* (Autonomous Macedonia), which was supposed to have a “purely Macedonian coloring” (*chisto makedonski kolorit*). Its contributors avoided any mention of a “Bulgarian population” in Macedonia and started referring exclusively to “Macedonians” and the “Macedonian people.”⁸⁹ About a year later the editors of the journal set up the so-called Macedonian Federative Organization (MFO). It sheltered

⁸⁶ Gyorche Petrov, “Makedoniya obezlichena,” *Byulletin na Vremennoto predstavitelstvo na Obединenata bivsha vătreshna makedonska revolyutsionna organizatsiya* 8 (1919).

⁸⁷ Nikola Pushkarov, “Stopanskata stoynost na Makedoniya i neynite săsedi,” *Byulletin na Vremennoto predstavitelstvo* 8 (1919): 7–8.

⁸⁸ Dimo Hadzhidimov, *Nazad kăm avtonomiyata* (Sofia, 1919), 21–26.

⁸⁹ Kostadin Paleshutski, *Makedonskoto osvoboditelno dvizhenie sled Părvata svetovna vojna (1918–1924)* (Sofia: BAN, 1993), 77.

many “dissidents” who opposed the methods of Todor Aleksandrov and the other right-wing leaders of the meanwhile (re-)established Internal Organization (IMRO).

MFO ideologist Slavcho (Vladislav) Kovachev might have created the first clear conception of the Macedonian nation (*natsiya*). However, again, this concept has certain particularities stemming from the old supranational program: Kovachev believed that “Macedonia” was a geographic designation that *had to* become national. Trying to fulfill this task, he called for the formation of a distinct national collectivity that, under the designation “Macedonians,” would unite the “Macedonian Bulgarians,” the Turks, the Albanians and the other elements composing the local “population.” All of them were urged to develop the consciousness of belonging to a “common nation.”⁹⁰ Slavcho Kovachev likewise believed in encouraging those people—who apparently were already making themselves visible—who had begun to call themselves “Macedonians” without adding “Bulgarians.”

This was certainly the case for another MFO activist—Trifon Grekov—who drew up a constitution and state symbols for the future Macedonian republic. The republic was supposed to be based on federative principles (with cantons for each national element of this “Switzerland on the Balkans”). Moreover, in his articles, Grekov traced the historical continuity of the modern Macedonians from Alexander the Great through Cyril and Methodius: he even declared that Macedonia was not a Bulgarian land.⁹¹ The Macedonian nationalism developed by federalists was further emphasized in the newspaper *Makedonsko sǎznanie*.⁹² It also recommended abandoning the diverse ethnic designations in Macedonia and consolidating all national elements into a distinct entity—“Macedonians” (*makedontsi*). Personalities such as Philip II, Alexander the Great and Aristotle appeared likewise on the pages of the newspaper.⁹³

By the mid-1920s the MFO ceased to exist and the circle around *Makedonsko sǎznanie* was compromised by its links to Belgrade. However, a

⁹⁰ Paleshutski, *Makedonskoto*, 90.

⁹¹ “Makedonskoto izkustvo,” *Avtonomna Makedoniya*, October 1, 1921.

⁹² “Macedonian Consciousness.” Although generally written in standard Bulgarian, the form of its title in Latin characters is *Makedonsko soznanie*: the second word reflects the particularities of the Macedonian pronunciation. The newspaper also published some short stories and anecdotes in Macedonian dialects. In the same period, the playwright Nikola Kirov Majski, close to the federalists, wrote in Macedonian. On Majski’s works: Ristovski, *Portreti i procesi*, vol. 2, 321–331.

⁹³ Ristovski, *Istorija*, 539–541.

wide range of other milieus inside Bulgaria embraced forms of Macedonian nationalism.

Nowadays Macedonian historiography refers, for instance, to the so-called Ilinden organization, based in Sofia. Unlike the federalists, its activists are generally regarded favorably by Bulgarian historiography today. However its leaders, Georgi Zankov and Arseniy Yovkov/Arsenij Jovkov, clearly stated their Macedonian separatism. In a November 1923 interview, Zankov and Yovkov declared that “the ideal of independent Macedonia” and “the Bulgarian state ideal” (*dǎrzhavniyat ideal na Bǎlgariya*) were separated from each other by an “irreducible contradiction.”⁹⁴ In April of the next year, Arseniy Yovkov wrote a memorandum to the Bulgarian government confirming this stance. He declared that the Macedonians were an “independent political element” that did not wish to have anything in common with Bulgaria. The document’s pathos culminated in a vociferous distinction between “Bulgarian state patriotism” (*bǎlgarskiyat dǎrzhaven patriotizǎm*) and “Macedonian patriotism” (*makedonski patriotizǎm*).

A year earlier, the Ilinden organization leaders demonstrated not only Macedonian political loyalty but also a certain cultural particularism when they refused to introduce the simplified orthography accepted in 1921 by the agrarian government of Aleksandǎr Stamboliyski. These activists called for the preservation of the traditional Bulgarian orthography, which they saw as “Macedonian.” According to them, the script in question was bequeathed by Cyril and Methodius to the “Macedonian Bulgarians,” who later gave it to the Bulgarians from Bulgaria, to the Russians and to the Serbs.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, the Ilinden organization did not venture beyond “political separatism”: Yovkov called his Macedonian compatriots “good Bulgarians.”⁹⁶

Similar “separatism” was also demonstrated in the 1920s and at the beginning of the 1930s by the right-wing IMRO, which was otherwise close to some of the governments in Sofia. During the same period, the old-new Internal Organization transformed the only part of “geographic Macedonia” belonging to Bulgaria—the Pirin region—into a state within a state, which had its own militia, system of “justice” and tax regime. The political emancipation promoted by the IMRO even found parliamentary

⁹⁴ Paleshutski, *Makedonskoto*, 195–196.

⁹⁵ “Makedonskiyat pravopis,” *Ilinden*, November 25, 1922; cf. Ristovski, *Istoriija*, 533–535.

⁹⁶ The text of the memorandum was published in *20 Yuli*, April 20, 1924. See BKP, *Kominternăt i makedonskiyat vǎpros, 1919–1946*, vol. 1 (Sofia: GUA pri MS, 1999), 206–208.

expression in Sofia: between 1927 and 1934, the MPs from the Pirin region were represented in a “Macedonian parliamentary group.” In fact, the idea was launched for the first time by the Ilinden organization, and it was put in practice despite Prime Minister Lyapchev’s fears of possible “national separatism.”⁹⁷ In February 1933 the pro-independence program of the IMRO was confirmed by a “Great Macedonian Assembly” that took place in Gorna Dzhumaya, in the Pirin region.

Is it possible to label these and similar manifestations as Macedonian nationalism? As a form of political loyalty, they are indeed very similar to expressions of a distinct nationalism.⁹⁸ But even a cursory glance at the publications of the IMRO and, especially, at the writings of its leaders (such as Todor Aleksandrov and Ivan Mihaylov) is enough to dissipate such an impression: these Macedonian activists were clearly Bulgarian nationalists. Their Bulgarian “ethnic” strategy nevertheless promoted a Macedonian political identity: “motherland Macedonia,” in its canonical boundaries defined by Kănciov’s map, was a prominent part of the discourse and the imagery of the Macedonian publications in Sofia. Cases such as the federalists show that the same imagery also inspired, in certain milieus and in specific circumstances, patterns of Macedonian ethnic differentiation. Finally, the latter was ideologically institutionalized by a political camp where federalists, some of the Ilinden organization leaders and, in general, all the targets of IMRO’s terror found their place: the communist movement.

Since its formation in 1919, the Bulgarian Communist Party advocated the creation of a “free” Macedonia, Thrace and Dobrudja as parts of a future Balkan Soviet socialist federation.⁹⁹ Interpreted today by anti-communist commentators in Bulgaria as “anti-national”/“anti-Bulgarian,” this program was rather intended to “solve” the national problems in the Balkans, particularly the *Bulgarian* one. The three regions (or at least substantial parts of them) were precisely those lost by Sofia as a result of World War I. They constituted the three axes of Bulgarian interwar irredentism. The BCP’s “internationalist” stance made claiming these territories impossible. That is why the already traditional (at least in the case

⁹⁷ Paleshutski, *Makedonskoto*, 115–116; *Natsionalno-osvoboditelno dvizhenie na makedonskite i trakiyskite bălgari*, vol. 4 (Sofia: MNI, 2003), 264–268.

⁹⁸ It is not by chance that the Macedonian historian Zoran Todorovski now tries to include the interwar IMRO into the Macedonian master narrative: for instance, *Vnatrešna makedonska revolucionerna organizacija 1924–1934* (Skopje: Robz, 1997).

⁹⁹ *BKP, Kominternăt i Makedonskiyat văpros*, 40–44.

of Macedonia) “political separatism” was the solution promoted by the Bulgarian communists—particularly by Georgi Dimitrov and Vasil Kolarov, officials in the Communist International.

However, in the communists’ rhetoric, this program gradually achieved a distinct national meaning, in keeping with the Leninist slogan of national “self-determination.” As early as November 1923, at the Sixth Conference of the Balkan Communist Federation—an extension of the Comintern administered by Dimitrov—Dimitrov’s colleague Kolarov declared that the “Macedonian population wishes to be recognized as a nationality, to obtain its own national rights.”¹⁰⁰ The term “nationality,” applied to Macedonians, is certainly new, but Kolarov’s innovation should not be overestimated: he added that the wish in question existed not only among “the Bulgarians of Macedonia” but also among the Greeks, the Turks, the Albanians and the Serbs inhabiting the region. Obviously, in the communist discourse, the old supranational program was evolving in the direction of a distinct Macedonian national program.

Supported by the Bulgarian leaders, the plan of separation of Macedonia from the existing Balkan states was imposed by the Balkan Communist Federation on their Yugoslav and Greek comrades, some of whom clearly did not welcome it.¹⁰¹ In 1924, under the slogan of an independent Macedonia, the Comintern, through its Bulgarian activists, even succeeded in establishing brief cooperation with the IMRO of Todor Aleksandrov. The result, the so-called “May Manifesto” (signed *in absentia* by Aleksandrov and personally by his colleagues from the Central Committee of the organization), called for the creation of a Macedonian state within “the natural geographical and ethnographic boundaries” of Macedonia.¹⁰² This state was supposed to serve as a link among the Balkan peoples and thus to facilitate the creation of a Balkan federation. The rhetoric of the document is very close to communist: it condemned “chauvinism” and “imperialism,” advocated the establishment of a “united revolutionary front,” and so on. Furthermore, it spoke only of “Macedonians,” “Macedonian population” and the “Macedonian people.” The last term was distinguished from the “Bulgarian people,” as if it were a question of two distinct entities.

After the publication of the manifesto, Aleksandrov quickly disavowed his signature, which may have been the reason he was murdered later

¹⁰⁰ BKP, *Kominternät i Makedonskiyat vāpros*, 151.

¹⁰¹ Kostadin Paleshutski, *Yugoslavskata komunisticheska partiya i makedonskiyat vāpros (1919–1945)* (Sofia: BAN, 1985), 114–143; cf. Dagkas and Leontiadis, *Komintern*.

¹⁰² BKP, *Kominternät i Makedonskiyat vāpros*, 216–222.

that year. Under his successor Ivan Mihaylov, IMRO became a staunchly anticommunist organization. The communists responded in 1925 with the creation of a parallel IMRO—called IMRO (United)—whose program was inspired by the principles of the May Manifesto. From the outset, the IMRO (United) propagated the Macedonian and Balkan policy of the Comintern and, in particular, of the Bulgarian communists: the organization was practically controlled by them.¹⁰³ Although the IMRO (United) was not so influential *per se*, its ideology and some of its leaders were important in the long run.

In the press of the organization, the expressions “Macedonian people” and “Macedonian population” definitively replaced the references to “Macedonian Bulgarians,”¹⁰⁴ although there were exceptions. From the outset, some of the activists claimed the Macedonians had a distinct national character, although in their arguments there were traces of the old supranational doctrine. A good example is the aforementioned Pavel Shatev. He formulated the Macedonian “national ideal”: the creation of a self-governing Macedonian state “with a Macedonian nation (*natsiya*) having its own history, an independent political and cultural life.”¹⁰⁵ At the same time, Shatev still spoke of Macedonians “regardless of their confession and nationality”: obviously, he was not thinking of “ethnic Macedonians.”

In August 1928 it was again the Bulgarian Comintern functionary Vasil Kolarov who made the next step. At the Eighth (and last) Conference of the Balkan Communist Federation, he stated that the Bulgarian bourgeoisie was practicing “assimilation” vis-à-vis the “Macedonian population” in the Pirin region.¹⁰⁶ The next year, a plenum of the Central Committee of the BCP defined the same region (as well as the Bulgarian part of Thrace) as nationally “enslaved.” Thus, by the late 1920s and early 1930s, in Bulgarian communist discourse, the term “Macedonians” acquired a degree of ethno-cultural content in accordance with the Stalinist formulas concerning the “national question.” By the end of 1933, the IMRO (United) subscribed to this line: almost unanimously, its leaders decided that, from a

¹⁰³ Decho Dobrinov, *VMRO (obedinena)* (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo, 1993), 41–42.

¹⁰⁴ See the collection of documents: *VMRO (Obedineta). Dokumenti i materijali*, vol. 1–2, ed. Ivan Katardžiev (Skopje: INI, 1991–1992); *Makedonskata nacionalno-politička misla meĝu dvete svetski vojni*, ed. Ivan Katardžiev (Skopje: Kultura, 1991).

¹⁰⁵ “Makedonskoto natsionalno osvoboditelno dvizhenie. Edna karakteristika,” *Makedonsko delo*, February 10, 1926.

¹⁰⁶ *BKP, Kominternăt i Makedonskiyat văpros*, 602–609.

(ethno-)national point of view, the Macedonians were different from the Bulgarians.¹⁰⁷

The result is well-known and frequently exploited by Bulgarian historical polemicists: in January 1934, the Political Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the Comintern approved a resolution on the Macedonian question and on the activity of the IMRO (United), by which it recognized *de facto* the existence of a separate Macedonian nation and Macedonian language.¹⁰⁸ The reference to a distinct language indicates that under the concept of “nation,” the authors of the resolution meant primarily an ethno-linguistic and cultural community (typical of the modern “stage of socio-economic development,” to put it in Marxist-Leninist terms). Hence, this concept of “Macedonian nation” differed substantially from previous usages of the expression, like those of Pushkarov, Kovachev or Shatev. While they still saw future Macedonian nationhood in the supranational way, that is, as a political consolidation of already existing ethno-linguistic groups (above all, the “Macedonian Bulgarians”), from 1933–1934 on, the communists identified this nationhood with the “Macedonian Slavs,” considered ethnically different from both Bulgarians and Serbs.

The Macedonian communists residing in Bulgaria and, in general, affiliated to the BCP embraced the new line. In 1936, during a trial against members of the IMRO (United) suspected of illegal political activity, almost all of them declared their “nationality” as Macedonian.¹⁰⁹ Persons from the same milieu also conceived the first drafts of Macedonian national history.

This was, for instance, the case for Vasil Ivanovski who, as early as in 1934, wrote the programmatic text “Why Are We, the Macedonians, a Distinct Nation?”¹¹⁰ The Bulgarian Communist Party activist inscribed modern Macedonians into a long historical continuity going back to ancient times. Their ancestors were the Illyrians or the “Macedono-Illyrians,” who later fused with Slavs. For Ivanovski, the Macedonian Slavs created their first state under the reign of Tsar Samuil. He also discovered a Macedonian national “Revival” in the nineteenth century—which, according to him, was distinct from the Bulgarian “Revival.” In Ivanovski’s view, the

¹⁰⁷ Ristovski, *Istorija*, 566.

¹⁰⁸ BKP, *Kominternät i Makedonskiyat väpros*, 881–884.

¹⁰⁹ Dobrinov, *VMRO (obedinena)*, 234–235.

¹¹⁰ BKP, *Kominternät i Makedonskiyat väpros*, 907–912. Cf. the collection edited by Ivan Katardžiev: Vasil Ivanovski, *Zošto nie Makedoncite sme oddelna nacija? Izbrani dela* (Skopje: AM, 1995).

fact that the intellectuals from that period defined their national belonging as Bulgarian was just a “subjective,” “exterior form” covering contents that were “objectively” Macedonian. But the author also referred to cases of Macedonian “national separatists”—like the aforementioned bishop Teodosij Gologanov. In his interpretation, the left wing of the Internal Organization from the late Ottoman period—consisting of figures like Jane Sandanski—likewise supported the idea of a separate Macedonian nationhood.

Edited by Angel Dinev, *Makedonski vesti* (Macedonian News), unofficial journal of the IMRO (United), also dedicated special attention to Macedonians’ ancient history. It firmly denounced Bulgarian historiography’s claim to medieval personalities from Macedonia such as Kliment of Ohrid and Samuil. In 1938 Dinev published his “contributions” to medieval studies in a pamphlet bearing the title *The Macedonian Slavs*.¹¹¹ His writings on the Macedonian national-liberation movement were also later collected in the two volumes of *The Ilinden Epos*.¹¹² Dinev’s reconstruction of the ideological trends and controversies inside the revolutionary movement is still largely the mainstream interpretation accepted by Macedonian historiography.

But the merits of Dinev’s review extend beyond the field of historiography. Although published (with certain exceptions) in standard Bulgarian, *Makedonski vesti* set as its explicit task the creation of a “purely Macedonian” literature. Between 1938 and 1941, this project was developed by a literary circle (called, of course, Macedonian) that brought together poets, writers and journalists affiliated with the BCP and with the IMRO (United).¹¹³ Among them were one of the most talented twentieth-century poets in the Bulgarian language—Nikola Vaptsarov—and future founders of the Association of the writers of Macedonia, the University of Skopje and the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Not surprisingly, Macedonian historiography lays special emphasis on this circle’s intellectual activity.

As already mentioned, contemporary Bulgarian historiographic and polemical publications present Macedonian national identity as a result of an anti-Bulgarian plot launched by Serbian political circles. But when looking at the profusion of Macedonian ideologies, programs and

¹¹¹ Angel Dinev, *Makedonskite slavyani* (Sofia, 1938); Dinev, *Etnografskata ideya na makedonskite slavyani* (Sofia, 1944).

¹¹² Angel Dinev, *Ilindenska epopeya*, vols. 1–2 (Sofia, 1945).

¹¹³ After its activists were prosecuted in 1936, it ceased to exist.

trends—be they supranational or national, leftist or rightist, marginal or consequential—in Bulgaria before the arrival of the communist regime in 1944, one may actually get the opposite impression. In many respects, the real cradle of Macedonian national ideology is Bulgaria. And Macedonian nationhood could easily be taken to be the unacknowledged child of Bulgarian nationalism. We saw how the Bulgarian (by ethnic self-identification) revolutionary movement in Macedonia promoted a political loyalty that, in the interwar period, developed into a distinct Macedonian identity. Indeed, is it not a phenomenon much more “Bulgarian” than “Serbian”? Furthermore, in the first decade of their rule, the Bulgarian communist authorities encouraged and even imposed Macedonian identity in the Pirin region: it was certainly not only because of the Yugoslav pressure, as mainstream Bulgarian historians argue.

In fact, this question brings me back to the Yugoslav context—in particular, to a component of it that was already evoked many times but not really discussed: the Serbian context.

*The Ethnography of the “Macedonian Slavs” and the
Serbian Contributions to Macedonian Nationalism*

In the preceding discussion, we saw how diverse political cleavages and the stakes of the moment tended to reshape the relevance of Bulgarian or of Macedonian identity for people who were educated in Bulgarian schools, expressed themselves in the standard Bulgarian language and identified themselves (at least initially) as Bulgarians or “Macedonian Bulgarians.” However, these individuals represented just a part of the Macedonian Slav-speaking population, even if—before World War I—it was the part most active and politically involved. They were the intellectual “elite.” But what about the vast majority of the population?

Many sources from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries attest to the unstable and shifting concept of nationhood among the Macedonian peasants. National affiliation was instead comparable to party membership—indeed, a number of sources speak of the Bulgarian, Greek or Serbian “party”—which was sometimes changed for purely pragmatic reasons.¹¹⁴ Some observers even believed that the Macedonians were a “nation without national consciousness.”¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ For instance, Brailsford, *Macedonia*, 102–103.

¹¹⁵ Aleksandr Amfiteatrov, *Strana razdora* (St. Petersburg: I.V. Rayskoy, 1903), 13.

This and such conclusions are certainly exaggerated: they are a cliché that is still frequently reproduced in the scholarly literature on late Ottoman Macedonia. The rich palette of national-liberation ideologies and movements mentioned above is undoubtedly sufficient to dissipate the belief in the “a-national” Macedonian Slavs. The phenomenon of the Macedonian peasants’ unconcern for national allegiance was certainly not invented by scholars, but it became so well-known largely because of the complicated international setting of the Macedonian question: the battle of diverse national claims generated interest in the mentality of people whose national indifference in other geographic contexts went unnoticed.¹¹⁶

As in many other cases, for the Slav-speaking Macedonian peasantry the most important identity was often (albeit not exclusively) the confessional one. They defined themselves as “Christians” (*risjani*), “infidels” (*kauri*) or “reaya” (*raja*), the last two designations being derogatory terms used by the dominant Muslims that evolved into self-identifications. The fact that the confessional identity was, in certain social and geographic contexts in Macedonia, the primary identity, while the national allegiance was secondary and changing, was instrumentalized by one of the countries that, by the end of the nineteenth century, claimed Macedonia’s territory, or at least considerable parts of it. This was Serbia.

Since the late 1860s, but especially after the Congress of Berlin (1878), Serbian scholars, intellectuals and politicians formulated these territorial claims and began insisting that, ethnically, the Macedonian Slavs were Serbs. In a long series of rather propagandist works, the Bulgarians were described as “Tatars” and “Mongols” by “race” that had nothing to do with the “pure Slavs” that inhabited Macedonia.¹¹⁷ This argumentation was clearly close to the Greek one from the same period: it described the Bulgarians in an identical manner while insisting that the Macedonian Slav-speakers were Slavicized Greeks. However, the development of Bulgarian nationalism and the weakness of Serbian within the most important linguistic “community” of Macedonia meant that some “refinement” of the Serbian thesis was required. It was suggested by the most famous

¹¹⁶ Here, the title of Eugen Weber’s classical study *Peasants into Frenchmen* is revealing enough.

¹¹⁷ See Olivera Milosavljević, “Crni Bugarine,” in Milosavljević, *U tradiciji nacionalizma, ili stereotipi srpskih intelektualaca XX veka o “nama” i “drugima”* (Belgrade: Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji, 2002).

geographer and geologist of the Balkans, a person with high international prestige—Jovan Cvijić.

In his writings from 1906–1907, Cvijić claimed that, from a national point of view, the Macedonian Slavs were an “amorphous” and “floating mass,” without national consciousness. According to Cvijić, they were predisposed to become either Serbs or Bulgarians depending on which country would annex the region. Cvijić noted that the same Slavs often called themselves “Bulgars” (*Bugari*) but insisted that, in their minds, this designation was not a national one. The scholar claimed that it denoted the social status of “simple peasants,” “small farmers”—just as the term “Greeks” was applied to the urban class and “Vlachs” to the transhumant shepherds.¹¹⁸

It must be emphasized that the geographer considered the northern parts of Macedonia (Skopje, the capital of Stefan Dušan, but also Prilep, the capital of Marko Kraljević, as well as Kumanovo, Tetovo and so on) to be “Old Serbia” (*Stara Srbija*), presumably inhabited by Serbs. He was obviously trying to legitimize, in a less direct way, the Serbian territorial claims. However his theory is, in some respects, close to the modern Macedonian perspective. On the one hand, at least in theory, Cvijić recognized (a segment of) the Macedonians as a third Slavic element between Serbs and Bulgarians. On the other hand, the Bulgarian (but also the Serbian) ethnic identification attested to by parts of the Macedonian Slavic population could be interpreted, from this point of view, as products of foreign nationalist propaganda. This is still the mainstream explanation in Skopje.

In any case, there are historical personalities from late Ottoman Macedonia whose identity largely “floated” between the Serbian and the Bulgarian national option. Between these also crystallized the “Macedonian” option, almost as a confirmation of Cvijić’s views.

One such case was that of Gjorgjija Pulevski, master builder; liberation fighter in Serbia, Bulgaria and Macedonia; and self-styled historian and lexicographer.¹¹⁹ Pulevski’s first writings were published in the 1870s in Belgrade: a *Dictionary of Four Languages* (*Rečnik od četiri jezika*, 1873) and

¹¹⁸ Jovan Cvijić, *Promatranja o etnografiji Makedonskih Slovena* (Belgrade, 1906); Cvijić, *La Péninsule balkanique. Géographie humaine* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1918). His ideas were influential in France: Jacques Ancel, *Peuples et nations des Balkans* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1926); Ancel, *La Macédoine, son évolution contemporaine* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1930).

¹¹⁹ On the life and works of Pulevski, see Blaže Ristovski, “Megjnikot,” in Ristovski, *Portreti i procesi*, vol. 1.

a *Dictionary of Three Languages* (*Rečnik od tri jezika*, 1875). The historians from Skopje refer to the second one in particular, as it introduced the term s. [slavjano] *Makedonski*, i.e. “Slavic Macedonian,” to refer the vernacular language in the region and expressed the idea that the Macedonians were a distinct “people” (*narod*).

Pulevski’s Macedonian nationalism is confirmed by other works of his. The autodidact asserted that “King Philip” and “Tsar Alexander” were of Slavic origin and thus confirmed the ancient ancestry of modern Macedonians. In 1880 Pulevski published in Sofia a kind of vocabulary plus “grammar” of the Macedonian language (*Slavjano-naseljenski makedonska slovnica rečovska*). He also left to posterity two voluminous unpublished writings: a “Slav-Macedonian” history (*Slavjano-makjedonska opšta istorija*) and another “grammar” book (*Jazičnica*). Pulevski’s language and orthography were a mix of lexicon, graphic signs and rules of Serbian, Bulgarian, Church Slavonic and even Albanian (which was then in the process of standardization). He introduced numerous neologisms that have not survived in contemporary Macedonian, but, in general, he opted for a phonological orthography inspired by that of Vuk Karadžić.¹²⁰

Yet there are reasons to interpret Pulevski’s case as an absence of clear national identity rather than as a “full-fledged” Macedonian nationalism. The meaning of the “ethnic” and confessional categories used in his works is often obscure. In *Jazičnica* the activist contrasted the designation “Catholic” with “Serbian”; in the same work, he placed the “Macedonians” among other categories that seem regional rather than national (such as “Herzegovinians” and “Thracians”). The very subtitle of the work identifies “Macedonian” with the “Old Bulgarian” language.¹²¹ Moreover, his first publication—the *Dictionary of Four Languages*—identified the Slavic vernacular language of Macedonia as “Serbo-Albanian” (*Srpsko-Albanski*). Other details of the Macedonian master builder’s biography confirm his activity in favor of one of the Balkan countries: in 1878 he was involved in planning a pro-Serbian uprising in northern Macedonia.¹²² In a letter from 1874, Pulevski even declared himself a “Serbian patriot” (*kao rodoljuba srpskog*).¹²³

¹²⁰ On Pulevski’s language and orthography: Trajko Stamatovski, *Borba za makedonski literaturni jazik* (Skopje: Mislà, 1986).

¹²¹ Blaže Ristovski, *Soznajbi za jazikot, literaturata i nacijata* (Skopje: MANU, 2001), 203–220.

¹²² Ristovski, *Istorija*, 53–57.

¹²³ Ristovski, *Soznajbi*, 207–208.

Pulevski's numerous self-identifications actually show how the absence of a clear sense of nationhood in a segment of the Macedonian population was instrumentalized to serve Serbian national interests. But it can indicate that the "Slav-Macedonian" identity was also the result of the same instrumentalization. That identity was even directly encouraged by representatives of Belgrade. Here the example most often referred to by Bulgarian polemicists is that of Stojan Novaković—the historian, statesman and diplomat who, in the 1880s, served as Serbian ambassador to Constantinople.

In 1888, in a letter to the minister of education in Belgrade, Novaković suggested promoting, among the Slavs of Ottoman Macedonia, an ideology he called "Macedonism" (*makedonizam*).¹²⁴ The term is identical to the one used as early as 1871 by Petko Slaveykov. "Macedonism" was seen by Novaković as a possible counterweight to Bulgarian influence in Macedonia: according to the Serbian diplomat, Belgrade had to use the existing, Macedonian linguistic and identitary particularism and to encourage its development. The aim was explicit: Novaković expressed his pessimism about directly "Serbifying" of Macedonians through education and other means of propaganda. He believed that the "Bulgarian idea" was already "deeply rooted" among them. The "Serbian idea" as such did not have much chance. However, an ideology that contained "elements" attractive to the local Slavic population could lead to its ethnic differentiation and separation from the Bulgarians. The propagation of "Macedonism" was thus imagined as a first step in a process of gradually Serbifying Macedonians.

The Serbian politician might have had in mind the "successful" example of Macedonian Slavs who migrated to Serbia and developed a kind of Macedonian pro-Serbian identity. One such case was Despot Badžović, a personal friend of Gjorgjija Pulevski, who in 1879 published a primer written in a Serbified variety of the Macedonian language. Similarly, some of the first "Macedonists" were educated in Serbia or under Serbian cultural influence; sometimes they sought to spread that influence. This was likely the case with four activists—Naum Evro(vić), Kosta Grupče(vić), Temko Popov(ić) and Vasil(ije) Karajovov(ić)—who, in 1886, formed in Sofia an ephemeral "Secret Macedonian Committee."

¹²⁴ The letter was published by Kliment Džambazovski, *Kulturno-opštestvenite vrski na Makedoncite so Srbija vo tekot na XIX vek* (Skopje: INI, 1960), 164–180; Idem, "Stojan Novaković i makedonizam," *Istorijski časopis* XIV (1964): 141.

The points of the committee's program would be repeated by other early Macedonian nationalists: re-establishment of the medieval Ohrid Archbishopric as the Macedonian Slavic Orthodox Church; the creation of schools where instruction would be in the Macedonian vernacular; and the publication, in the Ottoman capital, of a Macedonian newspaper directed against Bulgarian influence but loyal to the empire. With Novaković's help, they tried to edit a newspaper in a Serbo-Macedonian mixed language in Constantinople and prepared a Macedonian textbook (*Makedonski bukvar*), again in a strongly Serbified language variety. This was followed by the publication of another such primer (*Bukvar za narodne škole*), this time written by the Serbian propagandist Milojko Veselinović.¹²⁵ Apart from the textbooks, Novaković sponsored the publication of two calendars in Serbo-Macedonian (*Vardar* and *Golub*).

From a philological point of view, all these publishing projects followed the instructions suggested by Novaković and intended to bring Macedonian vernacular speech closer to standard Serbian. For instance, they avoided the use of definite articles and introduced typically Serbian terms. For Temko Popov(ić), these were "more natural" (*poprirodnite*) to the Macedonian than the standard Bulgarian loanwords. Popov(ić) also prepared a political pamphlet against the Bulgarian Exarchate (*Koj je kriv?* 1887), written in his native Ohrid dialect but in a phonetic orthography close to that of Vuk Karadžić.¹²⁶

It must be noted that, by the end of the nineteenth century, the Serbian intellectuals and political activists mentioned above were not the only ones who desired or tried to create a distinct Macedonian Slavic entity. The great powers with a geopolitical interest in Balkan matters were also inclined to subscribe to the existence of non-Bulgarian and non-Serbian Macedonian Slavs—most likely in order to deny either of the two Balkan Slavic states undue influence in that territory. In 1890 the Austrian Karl Hron authored a study on Slavs of Macedonia in which he affirmed their distinct ethnic character,¹²⁷ and, in 1902, the Austrian-Hungarian consul in Bitola (Manastir) suggested the publication of primers in the Macedonian language.¹²⁸ Again in 1890, the Slavic Charitable Society in St. Petersburg

¹²⁵ Džambazovski, *Kulturno-opštestvenite*, 162–164, 249.

¹²⁶ Stamatovski, *Borba*, 94–102, 225–241. After the Young Turk Revolution, Popović became Serbian deputy to the Ottoman parliament and, following the Balkan Wars, when Ohrid was annexed by Serbia, he was appointed mayor of the town.

¹²⁷ Karl Hron, *Das Volkstum der Slaven Makedoniens* (Vienna, 1890).

¹²⁸ Ristovski, *Istorija*, 264–265.

issued an ethnographic map that included a shaded area for “Macedonian Slavs” between those for Serbs and Bulgarians. The same year—again, in St. Petersburg—the Estonian Leonhard Masing presented the first PhD dissertation on the “Macedonian language.” Prominent Russian philologists such as Pyotr A. Lavrov and (the Pole) Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, publicists such as Nikolay P. Durnovo and diplomats such as Aleksandr Rostkovskiy likewise supported the thesis that the Slavs of Macedonia represented a separate ethno-linguistic element.

It was in Russia that a group of Macedonian intellectuals, previously educated in Serbia and in Bulgaria, developed their activity. The best-known among them was undoubtedly the aforementioned Krste Misirkov, who studied in Belgrade before he moved to Poltava, Odessa and St. Petersburg.¹²⁹ By the end of 1902, in St. Petersburg, he founded a “Slavic-Macedonian Scholarly and Literary Society.” The other founders and members of the association included Stefan Jakimov Dedov and Dijamandija Trpkov(ić) Mišajkov, who, earlier the same year, had published in Belgrade a newspaper of “Macedonist” orientation. The president of the society was Dimitrija Čupovski, also formerly a student in Belgrade.¹³⁰

The ideology of the association was publicized by Misirkov. In December 1903, soon after the suppression of the Ilinden uprising, he edited the book *On Macedonian Matters (Za makedonckite raboti)*.¹³¹ Today considered the “manifesto” of Macedonian nationalism, the work could be considered both a political pamphlet and the first serious attempt at standardization of the Slavic vernacular language of Macedonia. Although published in Sofia, it was written in the dialect of the Veles-Prilep-Bitola area.

In his work, Krste Misirkov asserted that the Macedonians were a Slavic “nationality” (*narodnost*), distinct from Bulgarians and Serbs, and he called for their recognition as such by the Ottoman authorities (pp. 20, 34). This meant in particular the establishment of a Macedonian Orthodox Church. Thus Misirkov suggested a program of Macedonian “national separatism” vis-à-vis the neighboring nations, which he contrasted to the mere

¹²⁹ On his biography: Blaže Ristovski, *Krste Petkov Misirkov (1874–1926). Prilog kon proučuvanjeto na razvitokot na makedonskata nacionalna misla* (Skopje: Kultura, 1966).

¹³⁰ His biography is again authored by Blaže Ristovski, *Dimitrija Čupovski (1878–1940) i Makedonskoto naučno-literaturno drugarstvo vo Petrograd. Prilozi kon proučuvanjeto na makedonsko-ruskite vrski i razvitokot na makedonskata nacionalna misla*, vols. 1–2 (Skopje: Kultura, 1978).

¹³¹ Krste Misirkov, *Za makedonckite raboti* (Sofia, 1903). To avoid an excessive amount of footnotes, references to specific pages of the book are provided in the main text.

“political separatism” of the revolutionaries from the Internal Organization (p. 99). His aim was similar to that of the revolutionaries: to prevent the division of Macedonia by its neighbors. Nevertheless, in his view, the country’s “integrity” could not be preserved without ending the current division of the Christian Macedonian Slavs among three national spheres of influence (“propagandas”): Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian (p. 134).

Yet Misirkov was convinced that the Macedonian nationalism he preached had to distance itself further from one of the propaganda sources: the Bulgarians. He declared that Macedonians’ self-identification as “Bulgarians” was the biggest disaster (*nestrek’a*) for them and that Bulgaria was “the evil demon” (*lošiiot demon*) of Macedonia (p. 57). The publicist did not spare his criticism of the Internal Organization, which he saw as “Bulgarian committees” led by Bulgarian/Exarchist “clerks,” aiming at the unification of Macedonia with Bulgaria and the creation of “Bulgarian Macedonia” (pp. 6, 7, 9, 12, 15, 17, 19, 54).

At the same time, Misirkov indicated clearly that his “national separatism,” or the thesis of a separate Macedonian Slavic ethnicity, was a “Serbian theory” and a “Serbian scholarly victory” (*srbska naučna pobeda*) (pp. 86, 87). On the one hand, he interpreted the idea of the distinctive character of the Macedonian Slavic language, shared by philologists such as Lavrov or de Courtenay, as a result of these scholars’ pro-Serbian orientation. On the other, he believed that Serbian influence in Macedonia was already influencing the local mentality toward “national separatism.” According to Krste Misirkov, Serbian propaganda in the region and its competition with Bulgarian propaganda led Macedonians to develop a distinct Slavic identity (pp. 70, 88–91). Serbian education was not able to “transform” Macedonians into Serbs, but it challenged, in the eyes of the locals, the hitherto exceptional character of Bulgarian identity as *the* Slavic nationhood *par excellence*. Unlike Greek propaganda, Serbian propaganda was Slavic and linguistically familiar, like Bulgarian propaganda, and it put in question the unique character of the latter. As a result, again according to Misirkov, the Macedonians distanced themselves from all of the neighboring national options. That is why the author was convinced that Serbian cultural influence would create the “ideal ground” (*prevoshodna počva*) for the development of “the new trend” (*nooto tečein’e*) of Macedonian nationalism (p. 98). He expressed hope that Serbia would support the project of “national separatism” (pp. 79, 84), and he was grateful to Serbia for having opened an identity gap between Macedonians and Bulgarians.

Misirkov's Bulgarian critics immediately cast his ideology as pro-Serbian.¹³² And indeed, in many respects, the Macedonian publicist and philologist was repeating theses and interpretations of Serbian historians and ethnographers from that period. For instance, he found that the "historical traditions" (*istoriickite tradicii*) of Macedonia show that the local Slavs were initially called Serbs, not Bulgarians (p. 125). But, as the moniker "Serbs" was too heroic in the eyes of the Turkish invaders and therefore dangerous, the Macedonian Slavs, fearing persecution, accepted the name "Bulgars" (*bugari*)—a kind of self-denigration as peaceful and simple peasants. This is exactly the explanation of the Bulgarian ethnonym in Macedonia suggested by Serbian scholars such as Stojan Novaković, Spiridon Gopčević, Jovan Dragašević, Jovan Hadži-Vasiljević, Vasilije Djerić and Jovan Cvijić. Moreover, Misirkov used a phonetical orthography close to the modern Serbian invented by Vuk Karadžić.

Nevertheless, Misirkov's national ideology was not inspired only by the Serbian one. Generally, in his works he oscillated between extreme Macedonian nationalism—sometimes, as we saw, with clear pro-Serbian elements—and Greater Bulgarian irredentism. This fact seems paradoxical and difficult to explain from today's point of view. But it actually shows to what extent, in its initial phases, Macedonian nationalism was entangled with the neighboring national ideological constructions. Already before *On Macedonian Matters*, Misirkov published texts where he suggested a rather Bulgarian point of view on the history of Macedonia and of the Balkans.¹³³ These perspectives evolved into Bulgarian "chauvinism" in his writings by the end of the Ottoman domination in Macedonia.¹³⁴ During the Balkan Wars (1912–1913), Krste Misirkov engaged in political activity as a "Macedonian Bulgarian"—a fact corroborated by a recently discovered voluminous diary.¹³⁵ Although he published two "national separatist" articles in 1914, throughout most of World War I he was involved in pro-Bulgarian propagandist activity within the Russian Empire. Following the disintegration of the Russian Empire amidst the Bolshevik revolution in

¹³² Aleksandăr Teodorov-Balan, "Edna makedonska teoriya," *Periodichesko spisanie* 65 (1904).

¹³³ "O znachenii Moravskago ili Resavskago narechiya dlya sovremennoy i istoricheskoy etnografii Balkanskago poluoostrova," *Zhivaya starina* 7 (1898).

¹³⁴ "Belezhki po yuzhnoslavyanskata filologiya i istoriya," *Bălgarska sbirka* (1907), (1910–1911); "Osnovite na edno srăbsko-bălgarsko sblizhenie," *Bălgarska sbirka* (1909).

¹³⁵ K. P. Misirkov: *Dnevnik 5.VII–30.VIII.1913 g.* (Sofia and Skopje, DAA-DARM, 2008).

1917, Misirkov even became a representative of the Bulgarian minority in the Bessarabian National Assembly (*Sfatul Țării*).¹³⁶

After the war, Krste Misirkov lived in Bulgaria, where he published newspaper articles that were unquestionably Bulgarian nationalist.¹³⁷ Yet a number of other writings of his, although not “nationally separatist,” insist on designations such as “Macedonians” and “Macedonian population” and demonstrate a certain identitary particularism.¹³⁸ Even more paradoxical is a third group of articles Misirkov wrote that, although explicitly Macedonian nationalist, still speak of the Macedonian language and culture as “identical” to Bulgarian.¹³⁹ For instance, in a text bearing the explicit title “Macedonian nationalism,”¹⁴⁰ the publicist also referred to his “Bulgarian patriotism” (*bălgarski patriotizăm*). In all these cases, Misirkov was concerned mostly with countering Serbian claims concerning Macedonia. Otherwise, the distinction he drew between Bulgarians and Macedonians was rather contextual and variable. But in some articles, he was able to overcome his anti-Serbian stance, dating from the period after *On Macedonian Matters*, in order to recommend Macedonia as a bridge between Serbs and Bulgarians in the framework of a future and “better” Yugoslavia.¹⁴¹

Krste Misirkov’s case is actually a good illustration of the theories insisting on the multiple and shifting character of identity. Other members of the St. Petersburg circle from 1902–1903 seem more coherent in their Macedonian nationalism. Such is the case of Dimitrija Čupovski who, in 1913, started publishing the Russian-language journal *Makedonskiy golos* (Macedonian Voice). Both in it and in periodicals of Russian Slavophiles, Čupovski published a number of articles that emphasized Macedonians’ distinctive ethnic character and countered Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian propaganda. In March 1913 Dimitrija Čupovski addressed to the London

¹³⁶ This activity is often emphasized by the Bulgarian polemical literature, such as Tsārnushanov, *Makedonizmăt*; Veselin Traykov, *Krāste Misirkov i za bălgarskite raboti v Makedoniya* (Stara Zagora: Znanie, 2000).

¹³⁷ For instance, “Narodniyat epos i Makedoniya,” *Razvitie* 2–3 (1919); “Sārbite—Dushanovata imperiya,” *Mir*, March 8, 1919.

¹³⁸ “Optimizām i pesimizām,” *Ilinden*, March 3, 1923; “Krali Marko,” *Ilinden*, March 25, 1923; “Protivoyadie,” *Pirin*, January 20, 1924; “Sveti Sava—srābska slava,” *Pirin*, February 3, 1924; “Shte uspeyat li?,” *Mir*, April 10, 1924; “Poveche makedontsi,” *Mir*, April 30, 1924.

¹³⁹ “Narodnostta na makedontsite,” *20 Yuli*, May 11, 1924; “Pātyat na primirenieto,” *Ilinden*, January 30, 1925. More coherent Macedonian nationalism is to be found in “Makedonska kultura,” *Mir*, April 19, 1924.

¹⁴⁰ “Makedonski natsionalizām,” *Mir*, March 12, 1925.

¹⁴¹ “Samoopredelenieto na makedontsite,” *Mir*, March 25, 1925.

Peace Conference (following the First Balkan War) a memorandum calling for the reunification of the parts of Macedonia annexed by the Balkan monarchies and for the proclamation of a Macedonian state. Thus Čupovski seems to be the first historical figure who suggested a full-fledged Macedonian nationalist program: he reconciled the “pro-autonomy” or “politically separatist” agenda of the “Macedonian Bulgarian” revolutionaries with the ethnographic thesis of the distinctiveness of Macedonian Slavs. In fact, Misirkov’s 1903 political pamphlet did not anticipate the establishment of Macedonian statehood: instead, it declared loyalty to the Ottoman Empire.

Today Macedonian historiography refers to personalities such as Misirkov and Čupovski as figures of exceptional historical importance. Nevertheless, until the interwar period, Macedonian nationalism remained relatively weak—if politically visible at all. On the one hand, despite all the memoranda, manifestos and articles published by the fathers of modern Macedonian national ideology, they represented rather isolated cases without real international importance. On the other hand, as we saw, their identity and political thought was often shaped by the propagandist constructions and strategies of neighboring countries of Macedonia—especially (if not exclusively) of Serbia.

The latter is confirmed by the case of two Serbian military officers who were also Macedonian natives: Grigorije Hadžitašković and Đorđe Gerdžiković. In 1905 they published in Belgrade the newspaper *Avtonomna Mačedonija*, calling for the creation of an autonomous Macedonian polity as a basis for a future Balkan federation. For both of them, Macedonia was a land with a Serbian historical and cultural legacy but with certain regional idiosyncrasies—like Montenegro.¹⁴² In July 1918, as officer of the Serbian army at the Macedonian front, Hadžitašković sent the Serbian authorities who took refuge on Corfu a petition for the recognition of Macedonian Slavs as a distinct nationality in the framework of the envisaged “Yugoslav” state. Backed up by the theory of Jovan Cvijić, such recognition could match the Wilsonian principle of self-determination and serve the Serbian cause at the same time. According to Hadžitašković, all possible international objection to the incorporation of Macedonia in the planned

¹⁴² Ristovski, *Istorija*, 230.

South Slavic state would be neutralized, Belgrade would obtain Salonika and Bulgaria would lose the region for good.¹⁴³

However, the government of Nikola Pašić was not disposed to make compromises with the “Serbian” ethnic belonging of Macedonians. In the framework of the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the Macedonian Slavs were treated as Serbs, or “Southern Serbians” (*Južnosrbijanci*); the thesis of the “floating mass” of Cvijić and the “Macedonism” of Novaković was discarded. The population of the Vardar region was educated in the Serbian language.¹⁴⁴ However, the use of the vernacular Slavic tongue was not necessarily forbidden: it was tolerated even in literary production as a “Serbian dialect.”

Thus, in the late 1920s and mostly through the 1930s, works appeared in Macedonian like the theater plays written by Vasil Iljoski, Risto Krle and Anton Panov.¹⁴⁵ The Yugoslav official press in Vardar Macedonia also published folkloristic materials in vernacular Macedonian.¹⁴⁶ In fact, these publications are not merely literary or linguistic curiosities: they went hand in hand with a certain identity evolution.

As early as 1926, Panko Brašnarov/Brashnarov, local activist of the left-ist IMRO (United), emphasized the “denationalization” of the young generation in Vardar Macedonia, a result of its schooling in a Serbian spirit.¹⁴⁷ According to Brašnarov, the Yugoslav regime was causing a “national crisis” (*natsionalna kriza*) between parents and their children. The newspaper of the IMRO (United), *Makedonsko delo*, had a somewhat different interpretation of the same phenomenon. According to the newspaper, the assimilationist practices of the Serbian authorities increased the number of young people “with a Macedonian consciousness irrespective of whether

¹⁴³ Bulgaria, says Hadžitašković, could otherwise refer “to the name ‘Bulgarian’ with which, according to Cvijić as well, the Macedonians designate themselves: we have to get ahead of them [the Bulgarians], to take the name ‘Macedonian’ and to give it all the importance it has to detriment of its relationship to the Bulgarian nationality” (Ristovski, *Istorija*, 490).

¹⁴⁴ On the Serbian educational and cultural policy in interwar Vardar Macedonia: Vladan Jovanović, *Jugoslovenska država i Južna Srbija 1918–1929* (Belgrade: INIS, 2002), 309–351.

¹⁴⁵ See Aleksandar Aleksiev, *Osnovopoložnici na makedonskata dramska literatura* (Skopje: Misl, 1972).

¹⁴⁶ See Stojan Risteski, *Prilozi za istorijata na makedonskiot jazik* (Ohrid: Macedonia Prima, 2000), 81–101.

¹⁴⁷ BKP, *Kominternât i Makedonskiyat vâpros*, 521.

they are Bulgarians, Vlachs, etc.”¹⁴⁸ Leftist activists applauded this trend, while their ideological enemies feared it.

Again in 1926–1927, the Central Committee of the IMRO received information suggesting the relative “indifference” of the people from the Vardar region to their “Bulgarian” nationality. These people readily adopted Serbian loanwords in their speech, accepted the new family names ending in *-ić*, and so on. According to the IMRO activists, the local schools were tolerant towards the use of Macedonian dialects and were trying to “amalgamate” them with standard Serbian: certain Macedonian language particularities and vocabulary that were closer to Serbian than to Bulgarian were especially promoted. In any case, the self-identification of the locals was changing. The IMRO leaders acknowledged the fact that “many Bulgarians formally say: we are ‘Macedonians,’ but this statement is meant for the Serbs and the Macedonians who are not trusted. Many of those who are not familiar with history, innocently believe in this and agree to say that they are Macedonians—neither Bulgarians, nor Serbs. . . .”¹⁴⁹

In the early 1930s the Bulgarian press also noted the identity transformations in the Yugoslav part of Macedonia. For some analysts in Sofia, the Yugoslav regime had become less oppressive, and this made easier the “assimilation” of the “Bulgarian population” around the Vardar region.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, while in the 1920s, there were still forms of pro-Bulgarian political activism in the region, during the next decade, the local Slavic population began to accept the Yugoslav reality. The young generation of Vardar Macedonians rejected the clandestine forms of struggle and the terror waged until 1934 by the bands of the IMRO based in Bulgaria.¹⁵¹ The agenda of the intellectually and politically active local Macedonians became less radical.

In the cultural domain, they were more concerned with the development of the Macedonian literary language, and in the political arena, they saw as a viable solution the federalization of Yugoslavia in which Vardar Macedonia would constitute a distinct entity.¹⁵² And, of course, just as in the other Balkan states, it was the communist party—in this case the

¹⁴⁸ *Macedonia: Documents and Materials*, 807–808.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 788.

¹⁵⁰ Kostadin Paleshutski, *Makedonskoto osvoboditelno dvizhenie 1924–1934* (Sofia: Marin Drinov, 1998), 261–262.

¹⁵¹ In 1934 the IMRO was declared illegal and its network was dismantled by the Bulgarian government of the political circle Zveno.

¹⁵² Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 327.

Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ)—that supported and sometimes inspired Macedonian political activism. Soon after the January 1934 Comintern resolution on the Macedonian question, the party's Fourth Conference recognized the existence of a distinct Macedonian "nationality" and "nation."¹⁵³

The most important manifestation of the latter during the interwar period was the MANAPO (*Makedonski narodni pokret*, or "Macedonian people's/national movement" in Serbo-Croatian)—a leftist organization of Macedonian students that existed from 1936 until the start of World War II. The movement sought to "awaken" Macedonian national consciousness, to develop the local language and to achieve the autonomous status of Vardar Macedonia in the framework of federalized Yugoslavia. The same emancipatory agenda could be found on the pages of the review *Luč* (The Ray), edited in 1937. Written in Serbian, it nevertheless published some texts in Macedonian (like the play *Pečalbari* by Anton Panov) and promoted the cultural and historical distinctiveness of the southernmost Yugoslav province. The contributors to *Luč* glorified Macedonia as a "cradle" of the Slavic script and civilization, they referred to historical figures as Kliment and Naum, the disciples of Cyril and Methodius, to their school in Ohrid, to the Bogomils and so on.¹⁵⁴ The review even criticized the official theses about the "Old Serbian" character of the Macedonian language. The authorities briefly tolerated the periodical but then banned it.

Citing examples such as MANAPO and *Luč*, Ivan Katardžiev, a historian from Skopje, believes that the interwar period was the "time of maturation" and of genuine "affirmation" of Macedonian national consciousness. In his opinion, the 1920s and 1930s were the second national "Revival" of Macedonians, compensating for their "delay" in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The "definitive affirmation" of Macedonian national activity was made possible, according to Katardžiev, because of "the elimination of the activity of rival propaganda, especially Bulgarian."¹⁵⁵ Given the fact that Serbian and Greek "propaganda" was far from eliminated in Vardar Macedonia and Aegean Macedonia respectively, following Katardžiev, one must perhaps admit that Macedonian nationalism crystallized precisely where the standard Bulgarian language, education and culture were successfully neutralized. This view is not far from that of

¹⁵³ Paleshutski, *Yugoslavskata*, 229.

¹⁵⁴ Katardžiev, *Makedonija sto godini*, 231.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 229, 256–259.

Krste Misirkov who, in his *Macedonian Matters*, saw Bulgaria as the greatest disaster for Macedonian cultural distinctiveness and noted that Serbian influence was the ideal ground for the development of the latter.

In a way, this observation only supports the Bulgarian thesis that Macedonian nationalism is a product of "Serbification." Nevertheless, one could also perceive a Bulgarian "legacy" of sorts in the Macedonian identity promoted more openly in the 1930s in the Vardar region. It is particularly clear in the historical references employed in the writings of local intellectuals such as the poet Kočo Racin. These references were Cyril and Methodius and their disciples, the Bogomils and the kingdom of Samuil, as well as the nineteenth-century "Revival," the Internal Organization from the Ottoman period and the Ilinden uprising. This "list" was clearly an adaptation of the Bulgarian pantheon of historical figures from Macedonia.¹⁵⁶ However, ingredients of the narrative under construction—its medieval and Ottoman parts, to be exact—were certainly adopted through a Serbian reinterpretation. The idea that the state of Samuil was "Macedonian Slavic" and not Bulgarian was launched by Serbian scholars, and even figures like the brothers Miladinov have been mobilized in "South Serbian" versions of the history of Macedonia.¹⁵⁷

Educated in Serbian schools, the Macedonian writers from the interwar period likewise used patterns of orthography that were close to that of Vuk Karadžić. In the Yugoslav context, the use of Bulgarian script was certainly inadvisable, if not impossible, but as a graphic system it was also too traditionalist in order to reflect the idiosyncrasies of a previously non-standardized language variety. In fact, writing in the Macedonian language was the particularity of the natives from the Vardar region vis-à-vis the Macedonian nationalists and quasi-nationalists from Bulgaria, who generally expressed themselves in standard Bulgarian. The works that were published in Bulgaria in the Macedonian language were again authored by personalities from the Yugoslav part of Macedonia like Venko Markovski or Kole Nedelkovski. Their activity, as well as that of Racin and of other young Vardar poets and playwrights, attests to a certain attempt to create an original literature in the local Slavic language.

¹⁵⁶ Racin had access to the publications of the IMRO (United): Blaže Ristovski, *Kočo Racin. Istorisko-literaturni istraživanja* (Skopje: Makedonska kniga, 1983), 136.

¹⁵⁷ Dragutin Anastasijević, "Hipoteza o Zapadnoj Bugarskoj," *Glasnik Skopskog naučnog društva* 3 (1928); Tihomir Đorđević, *Makedonija* (Belgrade: Udruženje Južnosrbijanaca, 1929).

This “linguistic” aspect of Macedonian nationalism was virtually absent outside Yugoslav Macedonia.

On the eve of World War II, illegal periodicals of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia also used the Macedonian language and referred to historical figures like Samuil or the revolutionary Goce Delčev.¹⁵⁸ The same holds true for the wartime press of the Macedonian communist resistance against the foreign—mostly Bulgarian—occupation between 1941 and 1944. This was actually the first important political movement of a Macedonian nationalist character.¹⁵⁹ Yet after the elimination of pro-Bulgarian and of more pro-autonomy leaders from the initial period of the struggle, the movement assumed an unambiguously pro-Yugoslav character. Macedonian national emancipation and the communist Yugoslav project became inseparable after the Second Session of the Antifascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ, November 1943). It decreed the creation of a new federative state that included a Macedonian entity.

As is well-known, in August 1944, the local partisan movement, through its own Antifascist Council (ASNOM), finally established the “first Macedonian state after Samuil.” The date, August 2, was highly symbolic: it was the day of the Ilinden uprising in 1903. In this manner the Macedonian partisans sought to obtain the legitimacy of continuators of a long historical tradition—especially of the revolutionary movement from the late Ottoman period, led by the Internal Organization. The doyen of the assembly, Panko Brašnarov, announced in an emotional speech the “Second Ilinden” of the Macedonian people and its definitive “liberation.” In a way, Brašnarov represented the claimed “tradition.” He was a former Bulgarian Exarchist teacher, former revolutionary of the “Macedonian Bulgarian” Internal Organization and activist of the “Bulgarian section” of Sandanski's People's Federative Party; member of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia since 1919; since 1925, a leader of the left-wing IMRO (United), which was instrumental in the communist promotion of Macedonian nationalism; again a Bulgarian teacher during the first years of the Bulgarian occupation of Vardar Macedonia; and finally, a participant in the Macedonian partisan resistance against the same occupation. At the end of this continuity of ruptures was the new federative Yugoslavia: Macedonia was proclaimed its “equal and full member.”

¹⁵⁸ This is the case for *Bilten* (Skopje, 1940) and *Iskra* (Skopje, 1941).

¹⁵⁹ On the importance of these publications in the standardization of Macedonian: Torsten Szobries, *Sprachliche Aspekte des nation building in Mazedonien: Die Kommunistische Presse in Vardar-Mazedonien (1940–1943)* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1999).

Conclusion

As we saw in the beginning of the chapter, today Macedonia's neighbors (especially the Slavic ones) often blame one another for fathering Macedonian nationalism and the Macedonian nation. While for the Bulgarian scholars the latter is clearly the result of Serbian propaganda, there were Serbian authors who see it as the offspring of a Greater Bulgarian manipulation. Meanwhile, Greek polemicists are tempted to interpret it as a product of pan-Slavic imperialism directed against "Northern Hellenism." However, as demonstrated above, all the neighbors of contemporary Macedonians have contributed, in one way or another, to the formation of their identity.

The Slavs in Macedonia have borrowed the reference to ancient Macedonia as well as the very name of the region/country from Greek nationalism. During the nineteenth century, Greek education introduced the myth of Philip and Alexander to the Macedonian population. By the end of the Ottoman period, Greek propagandists were even printing books in the Slavic vernacular celebrating the glorious endeavors of the ancient ruler in an attempt to convince the local population that it was not Bulgarian. During the interwar period, as well as after World War II and the Civil War (1946–1949), the administration of Greek Macedonia tried to convert local Slav Macedonians into proud descendants of Alexander—that is, into Greeks. To a certain extent the attempt failed but the myth worked: the "antiquization" (*antikvizacija*)¹⁶⁰ of the Republic of Macedonia today was largely inspired by emigrant communities in Australia and North America that came from Greek Macedonia. In 1991, after the Yugoslav republic gained independence, these emigrants proposed the contentious flag with the sixteen-pointed star from Vergina (the archaeological site in Northern Greece where the [alleged] royal tomb of Philip II was discovered).¹⁶¹

The Bulgarian-Macedonian connection is even stronger: nowadays Macedonian nationalism has incorporated a number of ideological representations inherited from Bulgarian nationalism. This is particularly

¹⁶⁰ A derogatory term introduced by intellectuals and public figures in the former Yugoslav republic who oppose the promotion of modern Macedonians' "ancient roots" and see it as political manipulation masking the real problems of Macedonia's society and economy. The term is used in particular to describe the instrumentalization of ancient history by Nikola Gruevski's government (in office since 2006).

¹⁶¹ On the role of the Macedonians from Australia and North America: Loring Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict. Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

true of the image of the spatial boundaries of “geographic Macedonia.” The borders claimed by Macedonian nationalists today appeared for the first time in Bulgarian maps from the turn of the twentieth century. The same image of the “motherland” was simultaneously made popular by the activists of the famous Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, established in 1893. Bulgarians by ethnic self-identification, the Macedonian revolutionaries used pro-autonomy and even strictly pro-independence political rhetoric that did not necessarily fit into the idea of “Greater Bulgaria.” Macedonian historiography also inherited much of the Bulgarian historical narrative, especially that concerning medieval history and the “Revival” of the late Ottoman period.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Serbian scholars launched the ethnographic idea of a Macedonian Slavic ethnicity and language, largely in order to counter Bulgarian cultural influence in the region. Serbian-educated Macedonians began publishing the first works in a Slav Macedonian linguistic variety distinct from the Bulgarian standard norm. They were also calling for the establishment of a separate Macedonian Orthodox Church: ironically, this is the main problem in relations between Skopje and Belgrade today. The Macedonian state is clearly a continuation of the Yugoslav republic established in 1944 by communists from Vardar Macedonia, previously part of Serbia and of royal Yugoslavia. They were educated in royal Yugoslavia and fought against the Bulgarian occupation during World War II together with Serbian and other Yugoslav partisans. In Tito’s Yugoslavia the Macedonians obtained an officially recognized standard language and their own alphabet, akin to that of Serbian.

Given these circumstances, Macedonian national identity looks more like a result of the three neighboring nationalisms than like a plot organized by one of them. And here one must take into account a number of other national and transnational projects and actors—like the Yugoslav idea in the past or Albanian minority activism today—that have also shaped specific features of Macedonian nationalism. In reality, the Macedonian case shows clearly the transnational dimensions of the formation of every nationalism: it suggests that the construction of national ideologies and identities must also be interpreted as a process of specific historical dis/entanglement, in which the neighbors are much more important than is indicated by national history. Of course, neither Macedonian nor any other national ideology and identity can be fully understood only as a product of such dis/entanglement. While this text emphasized the problematic aspects of “national belonging,” it is up to the national historians to trace its continuities and to fill in the gaps within it.

SECTION TWO

LANGUAGES AND LANGUAGE POLICIES IN THE BALKANS

INTRODUCTION TO SECTION TWO: LANGUAGES AND LANGUAGE POLICIES IN THE BALKANS

Alexander Vezenkov

Language problems have a central place in the attempts to study and understand the Balkans. Balkan studies, as an academic discipline, started with linguistic studies, and linguistics remains one of the core branches in this field. This is due in part to the variety of languages in the region and to the close connection between nation and language in all of the different cases, and also in part to the numerous parallels between the individual Balkan languages and dialects resulting from centuries-long mutual influences. But languages do not simply generate spontaneously—they are subjected to intentional policies and ideological interpretations. Here we are interested not in the purely linguistic problems but in the political implications of the different language reforms and policies.

The interconnections between language and politics are amply present in all Balkan countries, and for every one of them there is at least one well-known example that has been the object of numerous studies: the Kemalist reforms in modern Turkey introducing a new alphabet and the re-Turkization of the language; the two-century-long efforts to impose the spoken language as the official norm in Greece; the efforts to create and agree on one single Albanian alphabet in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as the standardization of the Albanian language during the communist regime; the attempts to codify Serbian and Croatian as (at least) two different languages or as one single language (Serbo-Croatian), as part of the dominant nation-building policy; the transition to Latin script and the re-Latinization of Romanian during the nineteenth century and the attempts to codify a separate Moldovan language written in Cyrillic during the Soviet period; the struggles to impose the western or the eastern dialects as a basis for the official norm, as well as the highly politicized debates concerning the orthography in the Bulgarian case; and the codification of Macedonian during and after World War II, to mention just the most important cases. In all Balkan countries a close connection between language and national identity is visible, which in fact means between language policies and nation-building process on the one hand and politicization of the problem on ideological and/or party lines on the other.

At the same time, there is a vast literature on the “Balkan linguistic area” or “Balkan *Sprachbund*” and the similarities and mutual influences between the various languages in the region. These studies are purely linguistic and examine spontaneous processes of convergence of the languages in the region in phonetics, grammar and vocabulary. Here, by contrast, we are interested mostly in the entanglements between the individual cases of deliberate language policy. In our opinion, due to these entanglements, every one of these language policies can be properly understood only in a larger context.

At a regional level the languages of the Balkan peoples are seen primarily as an integral part of their identity and individuality vis-à-vis their neighbors. In contrast with many elements of the material culture, of the traditions and the “mentality,” which are often labelled “common Balkan,” languages have always been instrumentalized first of all as a key sign of national distinctiveness, as well as national unity. Only specialists know about the Balkan *Sprachbund*, unlike the far more widely known “Balkan cuisine,” “Balkan music” and “Balkanization.” By contrast, Balkan languages are identified only with the respective Balkan nation. The reason seems obvious: every nation has its own language, in which education is conducted and national literature is written; the language policies almost always try to increase the distinctiveness of the language and therefore of the nation, and even when some of them stress a certain affiliation, this is usually with a geographically remote culture and/or political power (Bulgarian-Russian; Romanian-Romance languages), as a potential “ally” against hostile neighbors. This affiliation is usually intended to lend a certain prestige to the national language, underscoring that it belongs to a larger linguistic branch—whether Slavic, Romance (or more generally Indo-European), Turkic or something else.

That makes it even more challenging to examine the entanglements between the language policies among the various Balkan countries and peoples, certainly without downplaying some universal tendencies, given the fact that in all cases examples from Western and Central Europe played an important role. Language policies are interconnected in many regards, even if, ironically, what unites them above all is their ambition to make their language as different as possible from those of the neighbors. Thus, as a result of a mutual opposition, very often the same questions gained a central place in several cases of language policy in the Balkans.

The parallels between different language policies in the Balkans are largely due to the fact that linguists and intellectuals followed the same

leading models of nineteenth-century European linguistics in their attempts to develop and codify the national language. In some cases this is the contribution of leading linguists who influenced the development of more than one language in the region. The most impressive example is Şemseddin Sami (Sami Frashëri), who played a crucial role in the development of both Albanian and Turkish as modern national languages. He created the most widely used Albanian alphabet of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Stamboul alphabet of 1879. He was also the author of the famous *Turkish Dictionary* (1901), still widely used by specialists in Ottoman studies. His approach was largely similar despite the major differences between the two languages and their status: in both cases he attributed a central role to the language in defining the national identity, stressed the need for the development of contemporary “national” languages with the respective terminology in various spheres, and paid special attention to phonetics and its role in proper writing. Still, in many other cases parallels between different language policies resulted from the common cultural and political milieu in which they developed, as well as from the influence of developments in neighboring nations.

First of all, it is noticeable that in the Balkans special attention was given to the alphabet as an easily recognizable marker for identifying the respective communities. An important precondition for this phenomenon was the fact that, as early as pre-modern times, six alphabets with clear visual differences, and with long and rich traditions, were used in the Balkan area throughout the entire Ottoman period—Arabic, Greek, Cyrillic, more and more often Latin script and, concerning less numerous but culturally active communities, Armenian and Hebrew.

In the nineteenth- and twentieth-century history of the Balkan peoples, there were already several cases of transition from one previously established alphabet to a different one. Such a shift was related to a general political and cultural reorientation of the respective national states (Romania, Turkey). The choice of a Latin-based alphabet in the Albanian case not only resulted from the self-perception of the Albanian national movement as a “European” one, but also was a reaction to the attempts to impose the Arabic or Greek alphabet on the Albanians.

In almost all cases the graphic system carries an important ideological value, which is also reflected in the orthographic reforms. In fact these are the most visible and best-known parts of the respective language questions. In some cases there were partial changes in the alphabet, and the decision to introduce or abandon certain letters was intended not only to

make the alphabet fit the phonology of the respective language but also to make it clearly distinct from (or in exceptional cases, to make it more similar to) the alphabets of the neighboring nations.

A crucial role in formulating the language policies in the region was played by the principle “one nation—one language.” On the one hand, it led to efforts to consolidate one single written norm and to determined opposition to all attempts to create other ones within or outside the borders of the national state. Likewise, communities outside the borders of the national state usually made zealous efforts to follow the language standard of the mother country. Examples of this exist among all national minority groups in the region—in the Turkish, Greek and Albanian cases that were successful in the long run. Finally, one could also add the Romanian case, insofar as only in Transnistria is “Moldovan” still written in Cyrillic letters.

On the other hand, the attempts to legitimize a separate state and nation always went through a policy of developing and standardizing a separate national language, even if the differences from the already established norm were minimal (Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian; to a certain extent Macedonian vis-à-vis Bulgarian). In these cases the use of a different alphabet often proved to be useful (Serbian in Cyrillic vis-à-vis Croatian in Latin script; Romanian in Latin script vis-à-vis Moldovan in Cyrillic), or at least a number of different letters helped to make the visual differentiation easier (Macedonian vis-à-vis Bulgarian and Serbian).

In this category should also be included the attempts to create one single Serbo-Croatian language. According to the political ideology of inter-war Yugoslavia, the majority of the population belonged to one nation, the Serbo-Croatians. Furthermore, they spoke a single language, Serbo-Croatian. Article 3 of the Vidovdan Constitution (1921) even proclaimed “Serbo-Croato-Slovenian” as the official language of the kingdom of the same name. Language unity was crucial because of the religious differences among “Serbo-Croatians”—Orthodox, Catholics and Muslims. The recognition of the separate nations and their institutionalization in separate federative republics within communist Yugoslavia and even more after its disintegration finally led to the recognition and codification of several different languages, despite the limited real differences.

The ambition to highlight the distinctiveness of the nation and to preserve its spirit led to long-lasting efforts to “purify” the languages from “foreign” influences and loanwords. Loanwords from related languages (such as French in the Romanian case, and Russian in the Bulgarian one) were consciously adopted in order to replace words borrowed earlier from

the languages of the neighboring nations, usually as a result of political and cultural domination in the past. In this way Turkish loanwords were replaced in most of the Balkan languages, Arab and Persian words in Turkish itself, Slavic words in Romanian, and so on. There are also more specific cases—the firm opposition of the Croatian language-builders during and after World War II against loanwords was due in part to their abundance in Serbian. In fact this is a good example of how the same linguistic practice served different goals in different circumstances. During the nineteenth century the invention of new words and calques in Croatian (as well as in other Slavic languages in the region) resulted from following the German and the Hungarian model and from direct Czech influence, aiming at the purification of the national language; later on it was used simply to enhance the difference from Serbian.

The effort to purify the language of loanwords led to similar paradoxes in most Balkan languages—growing distance between the standard and spoken language, as many loanwords only remained part of the spoken language and the “dialects,” while the standardized language was constantly enriched with loanwords of more prestigious origin. Still, the intensive connections and influences from the past are clearly visible, for instance from the preserved Arabic and Persian words in Turkish, Turkish words (including Arabic and Persian ones) in other Balkan languages, and Slavic and Turkish words in Romanian.

The choice of specific words and the modification of the vocabulary have often been motivated by the ambition to achieve a clearer distinction from the other languages in the region. During the development of standard Bulgarian, one of the main goals was to make it as different as possible from Serbian. In the Macedonian case it was important to underscore the differences from Bulgarian and later on from Serbian, as a reaction to the strong influence of Serbian/Serbo-Croatian within Yugoslavia. And finally, the establishment of separate Serbian and Croatian in both cases involved the imposition of words that were absent or relatively rarely used within the other standard.

Another common trend was the ambition of at least part of the elites of every Balkan nation to write in a clear and easily understandable language. As a result, in several Balkan countries there were conscious attempts to simplify the official language and/or to impose the spoken language as official. This process was longest, and consequently most visible, within the two communities with the strongest tradition of high culture—the Greek and the Turkish one. Among some other Balkan nations such as Serbians and Bulgarians, the same controversy was resolved much more

rapidly and more easily early on, during the nineteenth century, as a result of the weaker tradition of written culture. It was not by chance that in these cases another question emerged as the priority, namely the problem of standardization of the official language—in Serbian/Serbo-Croatian, in Bulgarian and especially in Albanian. To choose the spoken language as a basis for the official norm meant, in practice, to favor certain dialects to the detriment of others during the development of the standard norm. This is clearly visible in the case of the western dialects in Bulgarian and the northern dialects (Geg) in Albanian, as well as with kajkavian in Croatian.

In most Balkan countries special attention is paid to the “ancientness” of the language; a primary motive is competition with the Greek case, with its long, uninterrupted and rich tradition of written culture. Ancientness was also important for attempts to prove a longer presence in a specific territory than some other neighboring nation, to claim the heritage of some ancient tribe and even for self-representation as the “autochthonous” population of the region. In a very similar way the Romanian popular history claims the linguistic heritage of the Dacians, the Bulgarian one claims that of the Tracians, and the Albanian one claims that of the Illyrians.

Depending on the circumstances, the same principle could play a different role in language policy in the various Balkan cases. This is the case of the phonetic principle “one sound—one letter,” which is usually considered “democratic” compared to the etymological principle, which by contrast is seen as “conservative.” In pure form this rule could be seen in Vuk Karadžić’s language reform in the Serbian case, in which a purely phonetic orthography was adopted. On the opposite side the etymologic orthography was later adopted as an important tool by the language builders of a separate Croatian. The ambition to comply with the “one sound—one letter” principle became an argument for imposing politically motivated reforms of the orthography in Bulgaria (1921 and 1945) and Romania (1953). In the Albanian case, however, the same rule turned into the main argument for those who wanted to develop an original and unique Albanian alphabet. Moreover, in Turkey after the Kemalist revolution, the “one sound—one letter” principle was used as an argument to adopt the new Latin-based Turkish script instead of Arabic letters.

Most language reforms were related to internal political struggles within the respective countries. Thus the first reform for simplification of the Bulgarian orthography was imposed by the Agrarian Party in 1921, but was abrogated shortly after the coup d’état of June 9, 1923, that removed them

from power. Another, almost identical reform was introduced in February 1945—five months after the Soviet occupation of the country and the communist takeover. A similar reform was imposed by the communist authorities in Romania in 1953, but it was partly revised in 1964 and completely abrogated in 1993, shortly after the end of communism. In Greece *dimotiki* became the official norm in 1976 shortly after the (re-)establishment of the democratic regime, and in 1982, after the Socialist Party came into power, the usage of diacritical marks (accents and breathing signs) was substantially simplified. The transition to a Latin-based alphabet as well as the policy of re-Turkization of the language in Turkey was an integral part of the radical reforms after the Kemalist revolution.

But these reforms could not be understood only within the respective national context, not even as a part of the general trend for “simplification” and “democratization” of the orthography and the alphabet. In this way the Romanian case clearly demonstrates that changes in one direction or another (the abolition of the letter “â” in 1953 and its partial and later complete reintroduction in 1964 and 1993, respectively) corresponded to the changing relations between this “island of Latin civilization” with the surrounding “Slavic sea,” and more precisely, with Moscow. Another example is the Bulgarian orthography reform of 1945, which was seen not only as “democratization” in contrast to the alleged “reactionary” nature (or simply “conservatism”) of the old orthography, but also in light of the improving relations with other Slavic nations. According to the argument, such a reform was rejected on earlier occasions so that Bulgarians could continue to distinguish themselves clearly from Serbs and Russians, but it was helpful at times when Bulgaria was oriented toward “closer and brotherly cooperation” with these peoples. Along with its pro-Western implications and practical usefulness, the new Latin-based alphabet adopted in Turkey in 1928 was also an opening for the new Republic of Turkey to the Turkic peoples in the Soviet Union, where Latin-based scripts were already in use.

As a whole the various language policies in the Balkans (and obviously outside this area as well) not only show similarities but have many points of intersection and long-term interplay. Hence in most cases they cannot be properly understood without taking into account these interactions. In this volume special attention will be paid to three such cases—Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian, Macedonian and Albanian. Precisely because of the entanglement of the language policies, the presentation of these three cases would make it possible to uncover a number of problems that also existed for the rest of the language policies in the region.

LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY: THE FATE OF SERBO-CROATIAN

Ronelle Alexander

Introduction

The case of Yugoslavia offers one of the most trenchant (and ultimately poignant) examples of the powerful role of language in the construction of identity. On the one hand, there was a single strongly felt identity which allowed the formation of Yugoslavia in the first place. On the other hand, there were several equally strongly felt identities which were utilized as tools by politicians in the wars that led to the country's dissolution. At one end of the spectrum, the cultural base which made a unified Yugoslavia possible was the sense of a common "Yugo-Slav" (that is, "South-Slav") identity among several South Slav peoples, based largely on the fact that most of them knew they spoke the same language (even as they were aware that their histories were very different). This language was known by several names throughout the period leading up to the formation of Yugoslavia and throughout Yugoslavia's life, but it is most commonly known outside Yugoslavia as Serbo-Croatian. At the other end of the spectrum, one of the major factors contributing to Yugoslavia's breakup was the strong sense of one of these peoples, the Croats, of the need to express more distinctly their identity, an identity which for them was strongly symbolized by language. Although Yugoslavia as a state persisted some decades after the Croat official declaration on the "name and position" of their language, the strength of their conviction, and the cultural tremors it sent throughout the country, can in retrospect be seen as one of the factors in "the beginning of the end" of Yugoslavia. The current post-Yugoslav language situation is one of several distinct but closely related languages: Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian have been internationally (and by all the actors themselves)¹ recognized as distinct languages; and although Montenegrin is on the way to such recognition, its status is not yet fully accepted.

¹ This statement must be taken with the proviso that the name Bosnian instead of Bosniak is still disputed by some of the actors; see below for further discussion.

The story is a paradoxical one. Clearly, a sense of cultural identity, manifested among other things by a unified language, was one of the things that held the country together. Because the country survived for over seven decades, this cultural identity must have been more than ephemeral. How then could the country (and its language) splinter so definitively and violently? And if the distinct cultural identities now manifested in each of the separate successor countries and their respective languages are so strong as to have supported (if not actually caused) this violent breakup, how could the country have survived as long as it did? The politics of language in the area are complicated by the fact that not all the actors view these issues in the same light. Not all supported the idea of a unified language, and many (primarily Croats) now claim that its existence was a fiction imposed upon them by the leaders of the unified state.² Conversely, despite the fact that Serbo-Croatian no longer exists as such, many still refer to it as a living language (especially those who consider it to be their native language) and claim that the existence of three new languages in its place is a fiction imposed upon them by the leaders of the newly separate states.

Language and Identity

Underscoring this disagreement, and contributing to it, is the fact that each of the two basic concepts stated in this chapter's title, "language" and "identity"—concepts whose definition most people take for granted—are subject to different interpretations. The most obvious function of a language is communication, from which it would follow that a language is no more than a systematic means to allow a group of people to transmit and receive messages. But since these "messages" frequently transcend the everyday, a language also takes on a cultural symbolic function and becomes the vehicle by which these same groups of people retain their

² The dichotomy between past and present views (or, as the author concerned would claim, imposed and actual views) is clearly seen in the titles of two articles by the Croatian linguist Radoslav Katičić. The first is "The Making of Standard Serbo-Croat" (in *Aspects of the Slavic Language Question I*, eds. Riccardo Picchio and Harvey Goldblatt [New Haven: Yale Concilium on International and Area Studies, 1984], 261–295). The second is "Undoing a 'Unified' Language: Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian" (in *Undoing and Redoing Corpus Planning*, ed. M. Clyne [Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1997], 165–191); note the quotation marks around "unified" in the second title.

historical memories and transmit their cultural heritage.³ One must also distinguish between the official codified version of a language (usually referred to as the “standard language” or the “literary language”) and the forms in which language actually occurs. Ideally, all educated speakers strive to adhere to the norms of the standard language which are held up as the correct way to speak and write, but in practice there are a number of different regional norms which carry equal if not greater prestige in actual usage. Most of these regional norms are associated with urban centers of various sizes, but a number are identified with particular rural populations. The term “dialect,” preceded by the name of a region, is frequently used to identify these different varieties. This term is also used to identify what are perceived as major abstract subdivisions associated with well-known traits (see below for discussion of the most significant of these, the čakavian-kajkavian-štokavian complex, and the ekavian-ijekavian-ikavian one).

The issue of concern, of course, is the difference between language and dialect. Where does one draw the line? When, and how, does one decide that a sub-variety of a language—whether it is called a dialect or a regional variant—qualifies as a separate language? One might think this is a purely linguistic matter, and indeed linguists are frequently called upon to make these judgment calls. At heart, however, the issue is a sociocultural and (above all) political one; this in turn is due, of course, to the bond between language and national identity. But, as Fine points out, when speaking of “national identity,” one must distinguish between political identity and ethnic identity.⁴ The former refers to the state in which one lives, whose passport one carries, and to whose leader one owes allegiance. The latter is a quite different matter: it refers to a strong sense of community based

³ The distinction between communicative and symbolic is drawn clearly by Ranko Bugarski in numerous articles; see especially *Lica jezika: sociolingvističke teme* (Belgrade: Biblioteka XX vek, 2001). See also Paul-Louis Thomas, “Fonction communicative et fonction symbolique de la langue (sur l'exemple du serbo-croate: bosniaque, croate, serbe),” *Revue des études slaves* 70, no. 1 (1998), 27–37; and my own “Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian: One Language or Three?” *International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics* 44–45 (2002–2003, publication date 2006), 1–35, the conclusion of which is that while there is only one language at the communicative level, there are three at the cultural-symbolic level.

⁴ John V.A. Fine, Jr., *When Ethnicity Did Not Matter in the Balkans: A Study of Identity in Pre-Nationalist Croatia, Dalmatia, and Slavonia in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006). Fine makes it clear that although his exhaustive analysis of the names people used to refer to themselves (and frequently their language) is focused on Croatia, he is convinced that a study focusing on Serbs or Bosnians would show similar results.

on the awareness of shared cultural elements (especially language) and history. Furthermore, whereas political identity is primarily a legalistic matter whose manner of determination depends upon the point in history and the type of political organization, ethnic identity is constructed. Namely, it originates as a conscious formulation of shared history and culture, a set of ideas which is usually the work of a group of intellectuals, which is then disseminated to the population in question. Only when this idea is internalized by that population can “ethnic identity” be said to exist.⁵

It is for this reason that most accounts of the Yugoslav “language question” begin in the early nineteenth century with the introduction of Romantic nationalism. Clearly writing and literature existed before that time, and it is also, and quite naturally, important for each of the groups in question to trace its history (and the modes of its written expression) back to medieval times. At the same time, it is misleading to assume that the written forms in question, and the adjective preceding the word “language” in documents of the pre-modern period, can be interpreted in terms of the modern nationalist period, let alone the perceptions of those politicians and language activists who argue these issues still today. This is not to say, of course, that the bond between language and identity is irrelevant. On the contrary, it is extremely important; and it is curious that many who write on language issues concentrate solely on the politics of “language planning” and seem to take these strong emotional bonds for granted.⁶ In what follows, therefore, I shall try to treat the interrelated issues of language and identity as they have affected one another during the convoluted history of Yugoslavia.

Dialectology

It will be helpful first to review the canonical dialect divisions which are mentioned in most treatments of these issues and to emphasize that the

⁵ This is the process discussed by Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991).

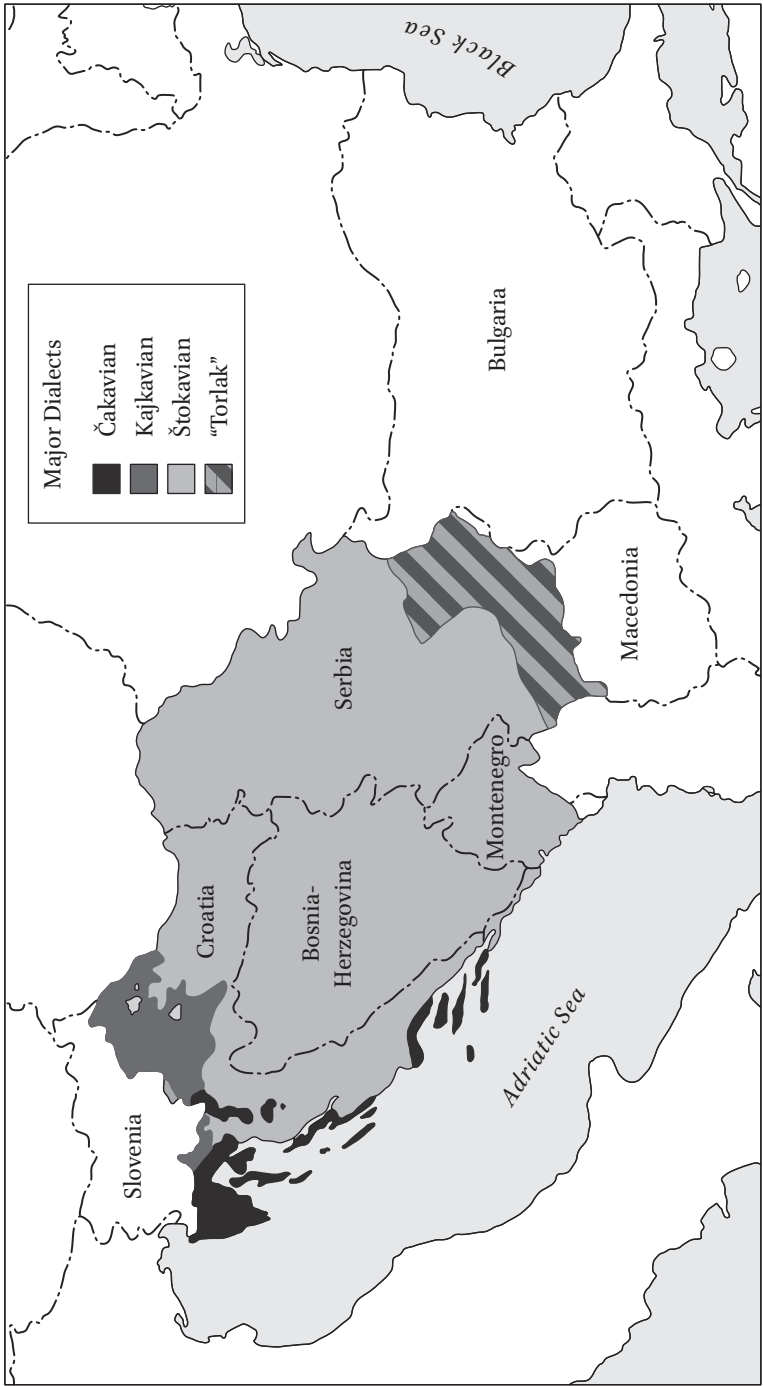
⁶ Robert Greenberg, *Language and Identity in the Balkans: Serbo-Croatian and Its Disintegration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) is an excellent study of language politics but—despite its title—pays no attention to the interaction of language and identity, and furthermore contains a number of errors. The focus remains unchanged in the second revised edition (2008), although some of the errors are corrected, and an epilogue gives an update of events.

two sets of divisions which are frequently mentioned together are radically different in nature. It is also important to recall that at no point in the history of the South Slavs have naturally occurring linguistic boundaries completely corresponded to political boundaries. Instead, there is a gradual continuum from the Julian Alps in the northwest to the Black Sea in the southeast and the Aegean Sea in the south—from northwestern Slovenian dialects on the one hand to eastern Bulgarian and southern Macedonian dialects, respectively, on the other.⁷ Mutual intelligibility naturally decreases the further apart one moves along this continuum, but there are no sharp divisions. Indeed, those divisions which are most significant from a linguistic point of view fail completely to coincide with political borders. For this reason the illustrative maps below depict the entire South Slavic continuum, despite the fact that the focus of this chapter is purely on the set of South Slavic dialects constituting that which used to be called Serbo-Croatian.

Each of these two divisions is named after a speech element marking a distinction of which speakers themselves are particularly conscious: in the first case the word meaning “what” (which is *ča*, *kaj*, or *što*, depending on the region), and in the second the pronunciation of a particular vowel sound (which is *e*, *ije*, or *i*, depending on the region). The critical difference between them is that the word for “what”—that which gives the čakavian, kajkavian, and štokavian dialects their names—is just one of many differentiating features, whereas the pronunciation of the sound that gives the ekavian, ijekavian, and ikavian “dialects” their names is the only differentiating mark. In the first instance, therefore, the three dialects function essentially as do separate languages, in that speakers of any one of them have to put in a fair amount of effort to understand speakers of each of the other two.⁸ Furthermore, each also has a very distinct literary and cultural tradition associated with it.

⁷ In the first two instances, national boundaries coincide with natural geographical ones: a mountain range marks the northwestern boundary of Slovenia, and the coastline of the Black Sea marks the eastern boundary of Bulgaria. The third instance is highly disputed: although the southern boundary of Macedonia is well to the north of the Aegean seacoast, some Macedonian dialectologists claim that Slavic dialects are spoken as far south as the city of Thessaloniki, which is on the Aegean coastline.

⁸ There are, of course, transitional zones with a certain amount of dialect mixing; in these areas the speakers of any two of these dialects will understand one another more easily.



Map 2. Čakavian, kajkavian and štokavian dialects.

As Map 2 shows, the area where kajkavian is spoken is located in the far northwest, and shades into Slovenian. Consequently, there have been heated discussions among linguists as to whether kajkavian is essentially Slovenian or Croatian. Kajkavian was the prestige written norm in (what is now northern) Croatia of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and even today is the native speech of Croatia's capital city, Zagreb. Čakavian is spoken mostly in coastal areas and was the primary prestige written norm in Dalmatia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (except for Dubrovnik [Ragusa], whose native speech was and is štokavian). Even today čakavian is the native speech of Croatia's second-largest city, Split.⁹ The third dialect, štokavian, covers the largest area by far and has the most diverse pre-modern history: within what are now Croatia and Bosnia, it was the written norm in Slavonia, among Bosnian Franciscans, and in Dubrovnik; it was also the base of the written language of other Bosnians, Serbs and Montenegrins.

Although known today by calcified linguistic terms that refer to a single word, these well-defined linguistic systems were clearly recognized in the past as distinct dialects (if not languages). The first documented use of all three of the current names, in fact (by the eminent Slavist Vatroslav Jagić), occurs only in 1865.¹⁰ Prior to that, various national and geographical names were used. As late as 1857, for instance, the terms "Serbian" and "Croatian" were used to refer to štokavian and čakavian, respectively.¹¹ For Ljudevit Gaj and the Illyrian movement, however, the term "Croatian" clearly referred to kajkavian.¹² From the early twentieth century onward, all major language handbooks have included maps of dialect divisions, and the primary classification in all such maps is this tripartite subdivision. By contrast, the area to the southeast called "Torlak" was recognized

⁹ The major divisions are generally agreed upon, but there are some differences of opinion, particularly as concerns the Istrian peninsula. The version pictured here, which identifies all of Istria as čakavian, is the one which usually appeared in school grammars, the best-known of which was Ivan Brabec, Mate Hraste and Sreten Živković, *Gramatika hrvatskosrpskoga jezika*. The edition cited here is the seventh (Zagreb: Školska knjiga: 1966).

¹⁰ Vatroslav Jagić, "Porovnání kajkavčiny, čakavčiny a štokavčiny," *Slovník naučný Riegera* 4 (1865), 303–304.

¹¹ Đuro Daničić, "Razlike između jezika srpskoga i hrvatskoga," *Glasnik društva srpske slovesnosti* 9 (1857), 1–59. Note, however, that Vuk referred to "čakavce i kekvce," as opposed to Serbs, in a note to the editor of the Zagreb journal *Pozor* dated March 4, 1861 (cited in Viktor Novak, *Vuk i Hrvati* [Belgrade: Srpska akademija nauka, 1967]).

¹² Ljudevit Gaj, *Kratka osnova horvatsko-slavenskoga pravopisa* (Budim: Tiskarnica Kraljevskoga vseučilišta, 1830).

as a separate subdivision by that name only in 1958.¹³ Prior to that, it was included within the štokavian area. Indeed, before 1944 and the recognition of Macedonian as a separate language, this area included not just southeast Serbia but also all of Macedonia. As part of their polemic with Bulgaria over the territory of Macedonia, Serbs claimed that Macedonian dialects were an archaic form of Serbian (and referred to the area as “Old Serbia”). Thus, the entire štokavian area included not only all of Serbia but also all of Macedonia. It was split into two major sections, “old štokavian” (*staroštokavski*), which included present-day Torlak plus Macedonian, and “new štokavian” (*novoštokavski*), which included everything else.¹⁴ The latter term has been brought into active use in post-breakup Yugoslavia and is usually encountered in its westernized form as “neoštokavian.”

Language handbooks also usually include maps of the ekavian/ijekavian distinction. These terms refer to the modern pronunciation of the old Slavic sound known as *jat*'. This sound is found in a number of very common words and therefore frequently occurs in speech. Because it is only one sound, however, it does not impede understanding, and consequently one cannot call these areas separate “dialects” in the same manner as čakavian-kajkavian-štokavian. One does find the term “southern dialect” associated with ijekavian, but this is primarily a historical reference to the dialect now labeled as “East Herzegovinian,” a dialect originally associated with that region which subsequently spread throughout a large part of the štokavian area as a result of migrations caused by the Ottoman occupation. Indeed, a look at Maps 3–5 will confirm the fact that ekavian dialects are located in the east, ikavian dialects roughly in the west, and ijekavian dialects roughly in the center. The fact that there are no other significant linguistic traits that fully correlate with each of these individual pronunciation features over its full area means that one can use the term “dialect” here only very provisionally.

At the same time this pronunciation trait is something of which speakers are acutely aware. In Bulgaria, for instance, it is codified as the well-known *jatova granica* (“*jat*' boundary”) and functions as the main feature

¹³ Pavle Ivić, *Die serbokroatischen Dialekte, ihre Struktur und Entwicklung I: Allgemeines und die štokavische Dialektgruppe* (The Hague: Mouton, 1958). This is an expanded version of his handbook written in Serbo-Croatian (*Dijalektologija srpskohrvatskog jezika, uvod i štokavsko narečje* [Novi Sad, 1956]) which, although published only two years earlier, considered the entire area štokavian.

¹⁴ Aleksandar Belić, *Dijalektološkička karta serbskogo jazyka. Sbornik po slavianovedeniju* 2: 1–59 (1906).

dividing eastern speech areas from western ones. In the Yugoslav regions, as will be seen, the fact of ekavian or ijekavian speech became strongly associated with national, ethnic, and political identity. But as the maps show, the actual pronunciation difference does not coincide with any one of these non-linguistic boundaries that correlate with identity.¹⁵

Ekavian pronunciation (Map 3) is found in most (but not all) of Serbia, in almost all of Macedonia, and in western Bulgaria, whereas ijekavian pronunciation (Map 4) is found in portions of western Serbia, nearly all of Montenegro, and the majority (but by no means all) of Croatia and Bosnia.¹⁶ The popular association of ekavian with Serbian and ijekavian with Croatian is thus only partially justified. The importance of these dialectological facts will become evident as the narrative progresses.

There is a third pronunciation, ikavian, which is found along the coast, in the southwest, and in certain northern pockets (Map 5). Although it ceased to be represented in official literary standard versions of the language(s) at the beginning of the modern period, it has played (and continues to play) an important role in the definition of Croatian linguistic identity.

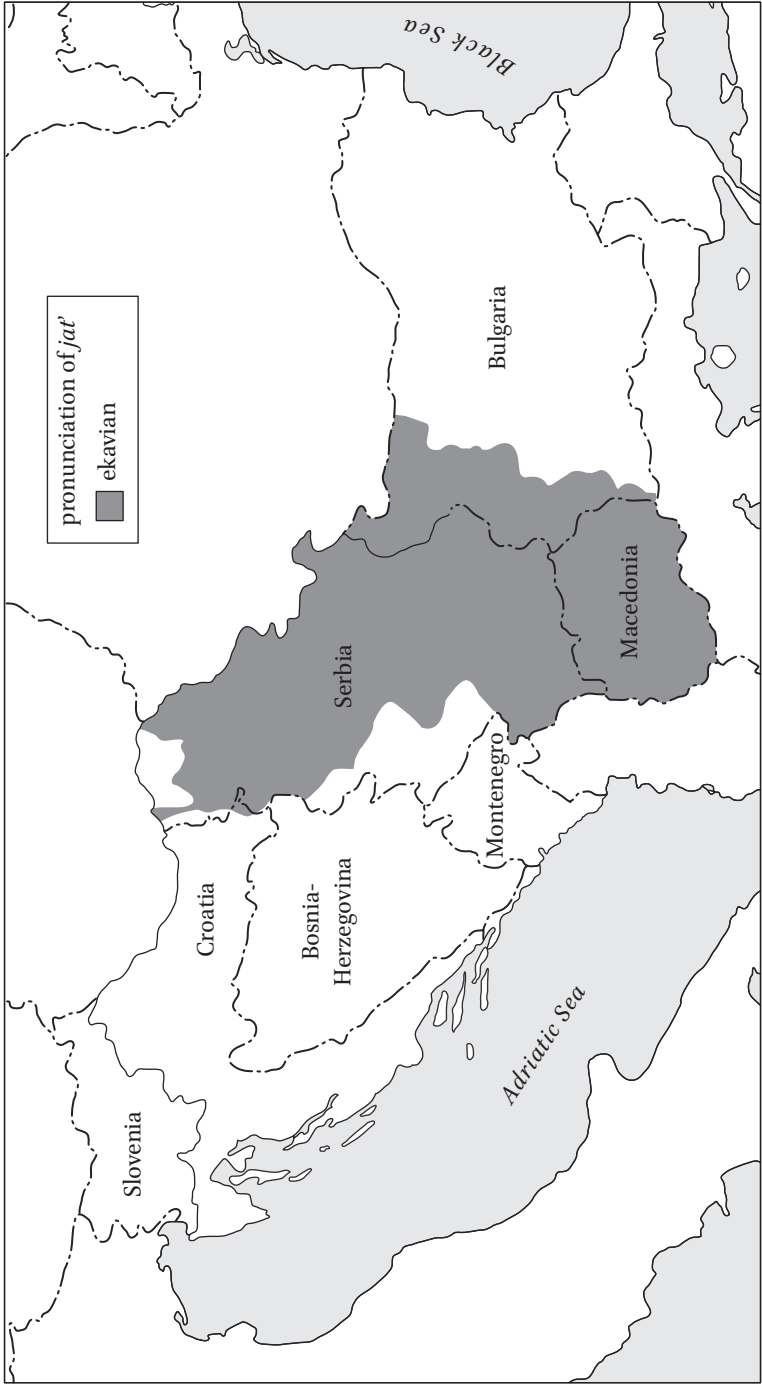
Modern National Identity and Romantic Nationalism

Let us return to Romantic nationalism and to the two movements which are frequently taken as the starting points of modern Serbian and Croatian, respectively (and ultimately of Serbo-Croatian). Each of these two movements, the reform efforts of Vuk Karadžić (1787–1864) and the Illyrian movement led by Ljudevit Gaj (1809–1872), represents a critical stage in the formation of the modern bond between language and identity—Serbian in the case of Vuk¹⁷ and Croatian in the case of the Illyrians. The

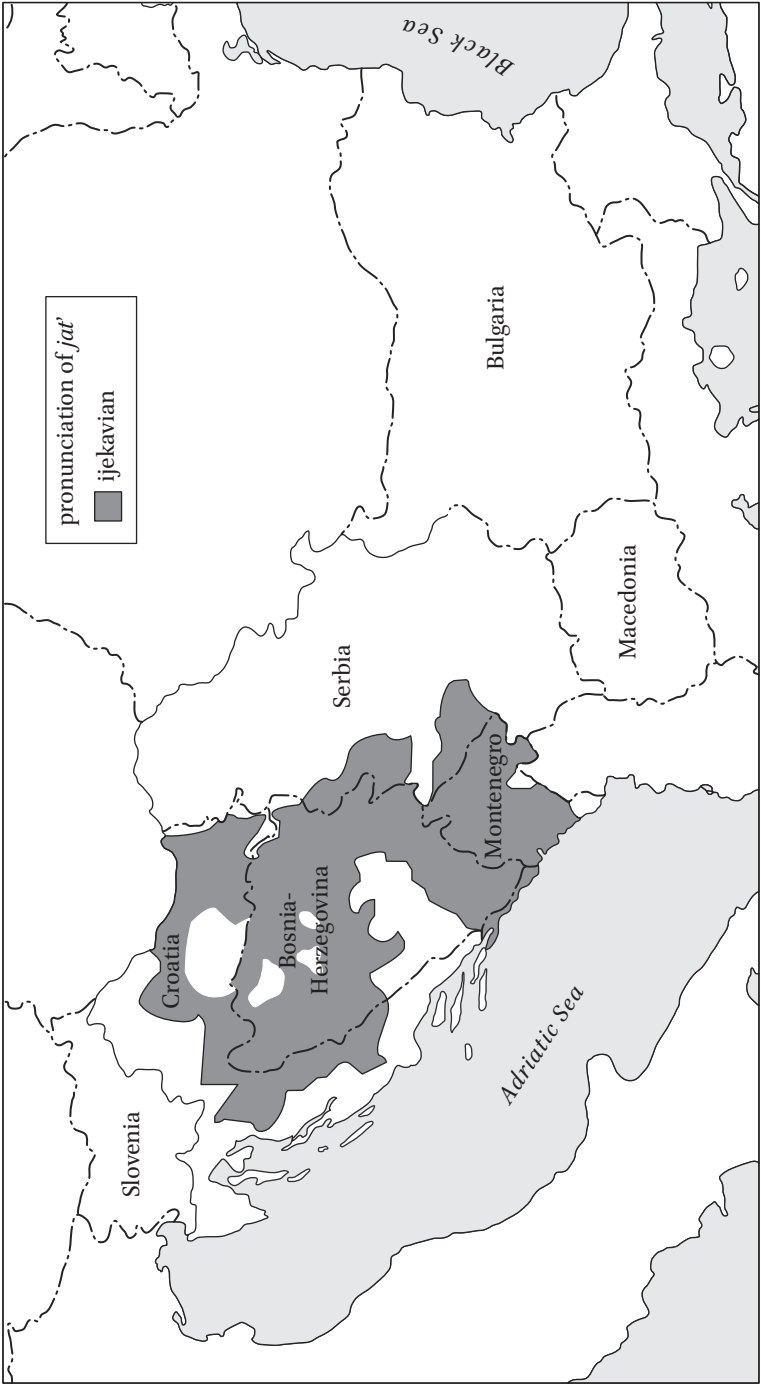
¹⁵ The primary source of these maps is Ivić, *Die serbokroatischen Dialekte*; the map for ekavian is supplemented by Bulgarian information from Stojko Stojkov, *Bŭlgarska dialektologija*, 3rd ed. (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1993). Only those Bulgarian dialects where *jat* is heard everywhere as *e* are depicted.

¹⁶ The relevant sound in Slovenian and kajkavian is closer to *e* than anything else (which is why kajkavian is frequently referred to as ekavian), but still different from the sound that characterizes the areas shown on the map (it is a higher, more closed *e*, which is clearly differentiated from another, more open *e*). The shape of the sound in southern and eastern Bulgarian varies and is not relevant to the current discussion.

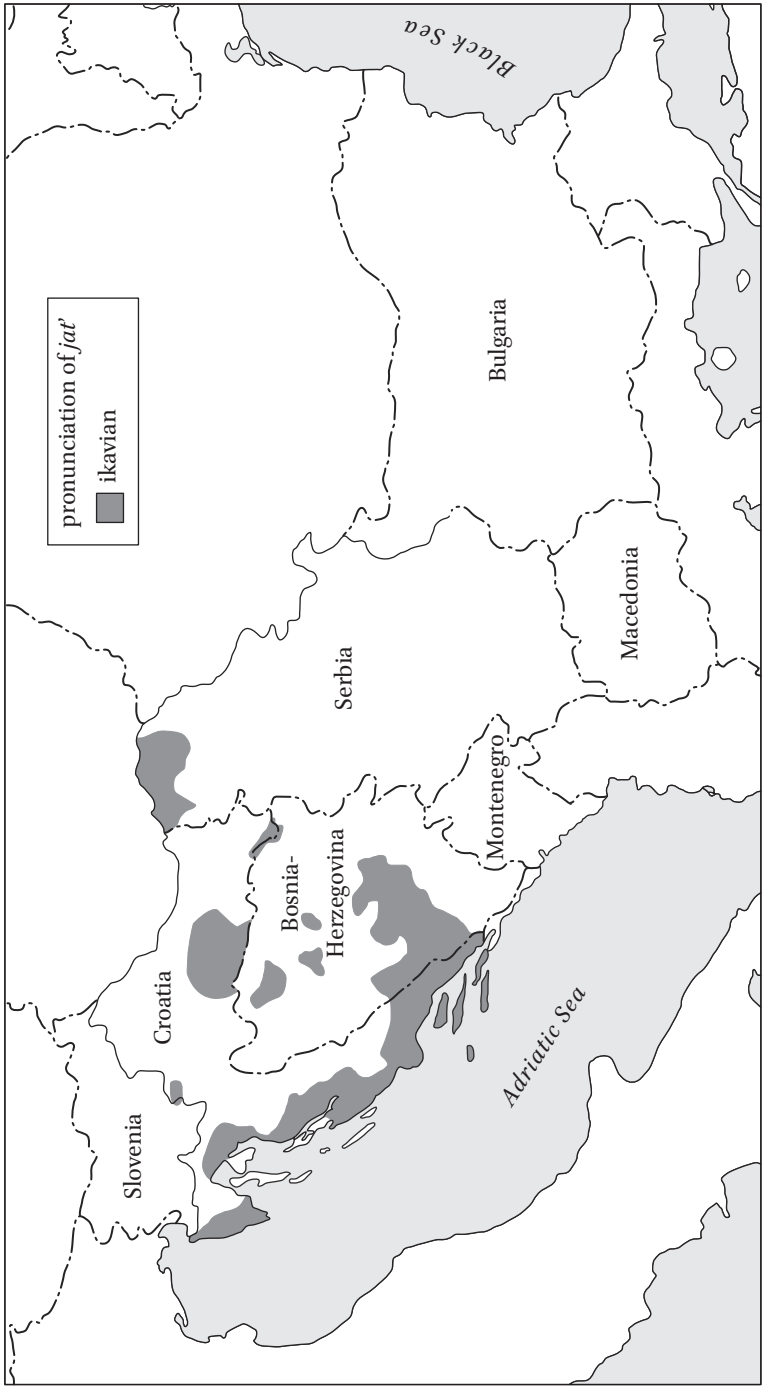
¹⁷ Vuk Karadžić is nearly always referred to by his first name only, a sign of great respect among South Slavs.



Map 3. Area of ekavian pronunciation.



Map 4. Area of ijekavian pronunciation.



Map 5. Area of ikavian pronunciation.

two undertakings are often spoken of in tandem, and indeed they do have much in common. Each spoke on behalf of a broadly envisioned community of South Slavic peoples; each sought to unify this community through language, not only via a reformed orthography but also via publication in this orthography of indigenous folk poetry; and each movement had a strong political component as well. Furthermore, it is frequently assumed that the natural culmination of these two movements was the Vienna Literary Agreement of 1850, which, by affirming that the two major groups were a single people with a single literature, lay the groundwork for the establishment of a single language. The parallels, however, are deceptive, and the retrospective (and oversimplified) equation of these two movements has led to much misunderstanding. Not only were the political circumstances quite different in each of the two cases, but the starting point (and consequently the goals, or envisioned ending point) of each movement was also quite different. Furthermore, there was never universal agreement on either side that the relevant proposal was the best or only possible answer.

In terms of politics, Serbia was forging its independence after long years of Ottoman occupation, and Vuk's goal was to further this independence by building a strong sense of identity based on popular poetry, primarily the *junačke pjesme* (heroic songs).¹⁸ Furthermore, he claimed, the written language should not be the arcane (as he saw it) church language, nor any of the then-current, mutually inconsistent attempts to write in popular speech. He proposed a single language which would be based solely (and rigorously) upon these folk poems, claiming that literacy would be much easier to attain if the written language were the same as the spoken language.¹⁹ Additionally, the use of this language would unite Serbs over a broad area. In his efforts to collect folk poems, and his travels throughout the land (specifically to Montenegro and Dubrovnik), Vuk discovered the extent of the area over which the same language (that is, the štokavian dialect) was spoken. Since he believed, according to the ideology of the time, that language was the major identifying feature of a nation or people, it was obvious to him that all who spoke the same

¹⁸ Vuk's work is amply documented. A detailed biography in English that focuses on his political and his humanistic activities is Duncan Wilson, *The Life and Times of Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, 1978–1864: Literacy, Literature, and National Independence in Serbia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970).

¹⁹ His much-quoted dictum is *Piši kao što govoriš, i čitaj kao što je napisano*—"Write as you speak, and read as it is written"—a dictum taken directly from the work of the German lexicographer Johann Christoph Adelung (1732–1806).

way were Serbs, regardless of where they lived or what religion they professed. This belief, set forth in a famous article entitled "Srbi svi i svuda" (Serbs All and Everywhere),²⁰ caused concern on both sides, both among štokavian speakers who were not Serbs and strongly Orthodox Serbs who believed that those of another religion could not be called Serbs. Regardless of Vuk's initial intent in making this sweeping Romantic statement, his article subsequently became an important political manifesto for the proponents of Greater Serbia, even as his intransigent ideas on language caused considerable strife.²¹

The Illyrians also sought to build a stronger sense of identity based on language and to create a sense of cultural unity over a broader area. But whereas Vuk worked for the cause of a newly independent single state, the Illyrians worked to establish a stronger and more unified Slavic cultural and political presence within the Habsburg state, with the goal of countering Hungarian cultural dominance.²² To achieve this goal, it was necessary for them to overcome regionalism and to integrate a number of separate identities. Each of these separate regional identities had not only its own cultural traditions and literary heritage but also its own strong views both on how the language should be written (spelling and word forms) and what its content (vocabulary) should be. The language of Croatia proper was kajkavian, that of Slavonia was štokavian, that of the Dalmatian hinterland another variety of štokavian, that of Dubrovnik yet a different sort of štokavian, and elsewhere in Dalmatia there were several different regional norms based on čakavian. Historically, all these areas had belonged to the Triune Kingdom (the Kingdom of Croatia, Dalmatia and Slavonia), and nominally they still did. By this time, however, all but a small portion—essentially the kajkavian-speaking area—was under Austrian jurisdiction. Thus, the Illyrians saw the goal of cultural unity

²⁰ Vuk originally wrote this essay in 1836, on the occasion of his travels in Montenegro and his discovery of the geographical extent of štokavian speech. He had first planned to publish it there, but finally published it only in 1849 in Vienna, under the full title "Srbi svi i svuda: Kovčezik za istoriju, jezik i običaje Srba sva tri zakona."

²¹ In his aptly titled monograph, *The War for a Serbian Language and Orthography* (Rat za srpski jezik i pravopis) (Buda: Štamparija Peštanskoga universiteta, 1847), Vuk's primary collaborator Đuro Daničić speaks of "thirty years of shouting and struggle" ("evo već trideset godina kako se oko toga viče i prepire").

²² An excellent survey of Gaj's life and work is Elinor Murray Despalatović, *Ljudevit Gaj and the Illyrian Movement* (Boulder, CO: East European Quarterly, 1975). See also, by the same author, "The Illyrian Solution to the Problem of Modern National Identity for the Croats," *Balkanistica* 1 (1974), 75–94.

(a unified identity) as a step on the way to eventual political unity (to be sure, still within the Habsburg dominion).

Vuk's goal, therefore, was to establish the popular language as the mode of national expression, in place of a language that was essentially based on the church language; he faced strong opposition from the clergy, which argued strenuously that the church had been the caretaker of Serbian identity for centuries and should continue to be the guardians of its expression. There had been moves to establish secular norms that were closer to the people's speech, but there was no consistency among them. The language was still relatively elitist with a clear connection to a church-based identity: the fact that the most prevalent form of expression was called *slavenoserbski* (Slavonic Serbian) indicates its mixed character. Everyone agreed, however, that Serbian identity was the issue.

The Illyrians, by contrast, had no need to argue the cause of a "language of the people": for several centuries already, literature written in the language of the people had coexisted with literature written in Latin. The relevant question for them was "which language?" to which the Illyrians sought an integrative compromise as an answer. The term "Illyrian" was purposely chosen to emphasize the broader base; indeed, the essentially Romantic nature of their vision is seen in their conception of "Illyrian" as embracing all South Slavs, even Bulgarians. Both their actual focus and their ultimate achievements, however, were closer to home. Essentially, they needed to come up with a concrete, single set of linguistic proposals acceptable to all the different schools, and furthermore to do it under the watchful eyes of a Hungarian administration.

The difference between these two points of view has been aptly characterized by Peti-Stantić as a difference between *Slavia romana* and *Slavia orthodoxa*, or the areas under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church vs. those under the jurisdiction of the Serbian Orthodox Church.²³ Latin, the language of prestige among the former, was nobody's language (*ničiji jezik*), whereas Church Slavonic, the language of prestige among the latter, was everybody's language, a concept most frequently expressed as "our [own] language" (*naš [vlastiti] jezik*). That is, the idea of Latin, an ethnically unmarked language and one which was universally accepted (by literati, at least), gave the Illyrians the model to strive for as they sought a form of expression which would be culturally all-encompassing

²³ Anita Peti-Stantić, *Jezik naš i/ili njihov: Vježbe iz poredbene povijesti južnoslavenskih standardizacijskih procesa* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2008), 131ff.

("global," in modern terms) and would articulate the requisite dignity and connection to the past. Their challenge, therefore, was to mold a sufficiently broad, and regionally unmarked, language that would nevertheless correspond to the vernacular, and would be acceptable to all. Church Slavonic, by contrast, was already the language of the people (or at least the literati) in the sense that it was recognizably Slavic and had already been adapted (in varying degrees) to popular usage. The process of replacing it with another form of the same language was in principle easier in that it was still recognizably "our own," but was in practice more difficult because it went counter to something considered sacrosanct. Vuk's challenge, therefore, was to convince his co-nationals that a literary standard based on a single, ijekavian-based form of the language which differed from those currently in use (each of which, in addition to maintaining various elements of high style, was exclusively ekavian) would best serve the interests of the people.

In the end, both the Illyrians and Vuk achieved their goals. Both established a unified and reformed orthography, and both nearly got their respective communities to accept a single form of the language which corresponded to the actual speech of most of the people in question. In both instances, this form was ijekavian štokavian, although each side chose it for different reasons. Vuk had from the outset insisted that the language must be that of the epic songs from the region where they were best known and consequently where the folk speech was "purest"; this was the specific East Herzegovinian dialect of his own ancestors. The Illyrians, by contrast, chose ijekavian štokavian among a number of contenders primarily because it was spoken by the largest number of people across the several regions; it was also significant that one of the most revered writers of the past which they strove to revive, Ivan Gundulić (1589–1638), had used this form of the language. But these results were achieved gradually and only through considerable struggle. The discontent which can still be seen today—on both sides—will become apparent as the discussion proceeds.

Vienna and Beyond: One Language or Two?

The degree to which the year 1850 is considered a watershed in the formation of linguistic identity depends on one's point of view. In that year, Serb and Croat representatives met in Vienna to discuss literary language policy issues. The Serbs were Vuk himself and his assistant Đuro Daničić, and

the Croats consisted of several highly prestigious writers, including Ivan Mažuranić and Dimitrije Demeter (the eminent Slovene linguist Franjo Miklošič [Franz Miklosich] was also present). The agreement they signed affirmed their awareness that “a single people needs to have a single literature” (“jedan narod treba jednu književnost da ima”), and that for this purpose it was best to choose one of the existing dialects to be the literary language (“da bude književni jezik”), namely the “southern dialect” (*južno narječje*), that is, štokavian ijekavian. The agreement concluded on an optimistic note, with the signers’ belief that if these principles were accepted by the people, significant literary problems could be averted, and real unity could be approached (“ako . . . te se ove misli naše u narodu prime, mi smo uvjereni, da će se velike smetnje književnosti našoj s puta ukloniti, i da ćemo se k pravome jedinstvu mnogo približiti”).

Received wisdom among later generations, including both the official Yugoslav stance and that of most outside observers, presents the Vienna Agreement as the first concrete evidence of a modern unified language, the first formulation of what eventually became standard Serbo-Croatian. Croats, however, take a markedly different view, emphasizing that Gaj was not one of the signers of the agreement (and was indeed skeptical of its value) and that none of the Croat philological schools representing the different written traditions accepted it.²⁴ In fact, though everyone wished for a sense of unity, the intentions of each side were in practice quite different.

Vuk stood resolutely for an exclusively štokavian ijekavian language, written strictly on the phonetic principle (“write as you speak”) and including only words which occurred in the East Herzegovinian štokavian dialect chosen as the base. The Illyrians, by contrast, proposed an orthography which paid more attention both to history and to the broad range of speakers it must serve. In particular they proposed using the “horned e” (ě) for jat—an admirable solution because it would allow speakers of ekavian, ijekavian and ikavian all to write the same way but each to speak in his own way. Furthermore, the language they had established included words and expressions from the broad range of literary traditions to which they were heir. They stood resolutely for a language which could

²⁴ Milan Moguš, *Povijest hrvatskoga književnoga jezika* (Zagreb: Globus, 1993), 158. The point that Gaj was not present does not seem to be relevant, however, since Gaj had fallen out of political favor after 1848 and was no longer an active force in these matters (Despalatović, *Ljudevit Gaj*, 194ff).

embrace elements not only of kajkavian and čakavian but also štokavian dialects beyond eastern Herzegovina. The grammars written in the 1850s described this language.²⁵ At the same time, it is clear that the writers of these grammars clearly saw the overall unity.²⁶ Writing in 1854, Babukić used several terms with the implication that all were equivalent, referring to the “Illyrian speech, or Yugoslav, otherwise Slavic or Croato-Serbian or Serbo-Croatian” (“*narječje ilirsko iliti jugoslavjansko, inače slovinsko iliti hèrvatsko-sèrbsko ili sèrbsko-hèrvatsko*”). Five years later, Mažuranić spelled out the relation explicitly: “The Croatian language is that Slavic speech... which the Serbs also call Serbian” (“*Hèrvatski jezik je ono narječje slavensko... tere ga Sèrblji također sèrbskim zovu*”), and continued, “Croatian and Serbian are thus a single people’s single language, with two generally different names as a result of the two major former states of this people.” (“*Hèrvatski je dakle i sèrbski jednoga istoga naroda jedan isti jezik, imajući ova dva obćenita različita imena kao proizvod dviuh slavnihi nēgdašnihi dèržavah ovoga naroda.*”)²⁷

Most of the markedly Illyrian features are seen in the above citations: the graphic form of the “horned *e*” (*narječje*, *nēgdašnih*), the short central vowel preceding what was for Vuk a vocalic *r* (*hèrvatski*, *sèrbski*, *dèržavah*), and the genitive plural in *-ah* (*dèržavah*). the insistence on which latter trait earned Zagreb linguists the nickname of *ahavci* (“ahavians”). The most significant difference, however, was a principled one: Vuk insisted on a phonological spelling, which reproduced the sounds of speech as closely as possible, whereas the Illyrians argued for an etymological spelling, which was more faithful to the base form of a word. Thus the Illyrians kept the *b* in *sèrbski* and *obćenit* (which reproduced the base form of *serb-* and *ob-*), whereas Vuk insisted on *srpski* and *općenit* (which reproduced the actual pronunciation).

As the wording of the Vienna Agreement makes clear, Vuk prevailed in every one of these instances. Some of the specific orthographic decisions were spelled out in the agreement itself, and the rest were covered in the statement that all present had asked Vuk to formulate the “major rules” (“*zamolili smo svi ostali g. Vuka Stef. Karadžića, da bi napisao o*

²⁵ Vêkoslav Babukić, *Ilirska slovnica* (Zagreb, 1854); Antun Mažuranić, *Slovnica Hèrvatska* (Zagreb, 1859). The major Illyrian literary work was Ivan Mažuranić, *Smrt Smail-Age Čengića* (Zagreb, 1846).

²⁶ Rado Lencek, “A Few Remarks for the History of the Term ‘Serbocroatian’ Language,” *Zbornik za filologiju i lingvistiku* 19 (1976), 45–53.

²⁷ Cited in Lencek, “A Few Remarks,” 49.

tome glavna pravila"). Although the Vienna Agreement did not name the language whose rules were now to be formulated, the terms used by members of the commission subsequently appointed to prepare juridical-political terminology suggest that a common name was understood. In the preface to the document about terminology, the Croat representative (D. Demeter) refers to the "Croato-Serbian speech of the Yugoslav language" (*hrvatsko-srbsko narječje jugoslavenskoga jezika*), while the Serb representative (B. Petranović) refers to the "Yugoslav Serbo-Croatian people" (*južnoslavenski srb-rvatski narod*).²⁸ The personage with whom this "non-Illyrian" form of the language was associated, however—Vuk himself—continued to use the term "Serbian."

Among the disillusioned members of the Illyrian movement was the future politician Ante Starčević (1823–1896), who published sharp attacks on Vuk's linguistic proposals (and who was one of the first to brand Vuk's language as the "language of cowherds and swineherds"). He strongly resisted a proposal for linguistic unity between Serbs and Croats that, in his view, amounted to the imposition of Serbian identity upon Croats. His initial writings were linguistic, and in 1851 he even advertised his intention of writing a Croatian grammar.²⁹ He soon moved into politics, however, founding the Party of Rights (*Stranka prava*), a reference to the "Croat historical rights" according to which Croatia should be a separate nation. He even denied Serbian identity altogether, claiming that South Slavs who were not Bulgars were "politically" Croats.³⁰ Starčević's view thus stood more or less in direct contrast to Vuk's view that all štokavian speakers were Serbs.³¹ In his final statement on these issues, made in 1861, Vuk stood by his view that language was the most reasonable determining factor of national identity. But, he continued, if Croats did not accept this, then the only other possible choice was to define identity by faith. Those belonging to the Orthodox faith, he said, would never call themselves anything other than Serb, and if those of the Roman faith wished to call

²⁸ *Juridisch-politische Terminologie für die slavischen Sprachen Österreichs. Von der Commission für slavische juridisch-politische Terminologie, Deutsch-kroatische, serbische und slovenische separat-Ausgabe* (Vienna, 1853). Cited in Lencek, "A Few Remarks," 49.

²⁹ Ivo Banac, "Main Trends in the Croat Language Question," Picchio and Goldblatt, *Aspects of the Slavic Language Question*, 234.

³⁰ Banac, "Main Trends," 215. Banac sees this as parallel to Vuk's "Serbian nationalist integrative ideology, capable of assimilating Croat population." *Ibid.*, 229.

³¹ Ivo Goldstein, *Hrvatska povijest* (Zagreb: Novi Liber, 2003), 200.

themselves Croats, that was their choice.³² This, indeed, is how matters stand still today.

Although Starčević won a number of adherents, most Croats were generally in favor of national unity among South Slavs, and Vuk's proposals won many followers. The opening words of Daničić's manifesto expressed the views of many (and might even have been written by Gaj himself, although Gaj would no doubt have used a more formal style): "Each thinks he is right and no one will give in, but the real victims are the truth and the poor suffering people" ("Svak misli da ima pravo, pa ne će ni jedan da popusti, a istina kukavica strada i siromah narod").³³ Powerful Croats such as Bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer (1815–1905), Franjo Rački (1828–1894) and Vatroslav Jagić (1838–1923) supported the cause of unity; and in 1866, two years after Vuk's death, Đuro Daničić was invited to Zagreb to work out the details of Vuk's proposals, a task at which he worked until his death in 1882. The Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts (JAZU) was established in Zagreb in 1867, with Daničić as its first secretary. Subsequently Daničić became the first editor of the Academy's massive *Dictionary of the Croatian or Serbian Language* (*Rječnik hrvatskoga ili srpskoga jezika*), whose first volume appeared in 1880 and whose final volume appeared only in 1976. Linguists who continued work in Daničić's spirit after his death were referred to as the Croatian Vukovites (*hrvatski vukovci*). Their publications included an orthographic manual,³⁴ a one-volume dictionary³⁵ and a grammar,³⁶ two of which identified the language in question as Croatian, and the third of which identified it as "Croatian or Serbian."³⁷ All contributed significantly to the establishment of Vuk's language in Croatia; in addition, the grammar was acknowledged as an outstanding example of linguistic scholarship.³⁸

At the same time many Croats were disturbed at the content of the dictionary and the tone of the grammar. Both were written on the assumption that the language being described was exclusively the štokavian of

³² Vuk Karadžić, *Srbi i Hrvati*; cited in Banac, "Main Trends," 234.

³³ *Rat za srpski jezik i pravopis*, 1.

³⁴ Ivan Broz, *Hrvatski pravopis* (Zagreb, 1892).

³⁵ Ivan Broz and Franjo Iveković, *Rječnik hrvatskoga jezika* (Zagreb, 1901).

³⁶ Tomo Maretić, *Gramatika i stilistika hrvatskoga ili srpskoga jezika* (Zagreb, 1899).

³⁷ Both the dictionary and the orthography manual used the term "Croatian" in their titles because, according to the authors, they were written and published by Croats. Moguš, *Povijest*, 176.

³⁸ Moguš, *Povijest*, 175.

Vuk, which meant not only that any words or phrases not part of Vuk's folklorically based lexicon were omitted, but also even that the titles of any literary works written in kajkavian or čakavian (discussed in the stylistic sections of the grammar) were translated into štokavian instead of being cited in their original form. The several non-Vukovian schools continued to work on their own, but at this point they had little influence in the face of these powerful Vukovian-based publications, whose authors enjoyed the support of the Austro-Hungarian authorities and of JAZU. It may seem strange that language activities associated with the "Yugoslav" academy (and therefore at least implicitly favoring a Yugoslav, or unified South Slavic, cause) should have been supported by the administration (1883–1903) of Károly Khuen-Héderváry, who was known for his opposition to Serb-Croat unity and who worked deliberately to increase antagonism between the two peoples. The fact of Khuen-Héderváry's support would seem to suggest that he perceived the work of the Vukovians not so much as a unifying, "Yugo"-Slav factor but as an antidote to growing Croat nationalism.

Meanwhile, Serbia had finally gained full independence in 1878 and was vigorously pursuing its own causes. Vuk's "war for the Serbian language and orthography" had been won, though his principles were not officially embraced until 1868, four years after his death. Indeed, one of these principles was ignored almost from the beginning. Namely, except for a very few early attempts, the only notable Serbian literary works in ijekavian derive from Montenegro (where ijekavian speech is the norm).³⁹ Otherwise, Serbs continued to write ekavian, which was not only the native pronunciation of the vast majority (and of the cultural centers of Belgrade and Novi Sad), but also the norm of their pre-modern literary tradition (at least as concerns that sound). Had Bosnia-Herzegovina not been integrated into the Austro-Hungarian sphere in 1878, Serbia would most likely have pushed to expand its borders to the west, which would have meant integrating into their state many ijekavian speakers. Now, however, Serbia turned its attention to the south and to the drive to recapture its ancestral lands in Kosovo and Macedonia, where the speech was purely ekavian (see Map 3).

³⁹ By far the most famous of these are the works of Prince-Bishop Njegoš, especially *Luča mikrokozma* (The Ray of the Microcosm) (Belgrade, 1845); and *Gorski vijenac* (The Mountain Wreath) (Vienna, 1847).

Simultaneously with their intent on regaining their ancestral homelands to the south, Serbs were highly conscious of moving into the modern European age and making sure that their language moved with them. There was constant discussion among linguists about the shape the language should take (a language which was consistently called "Serbian"). It was generally agreed that it was acceptable (and desirable) to adopt words from Western languages in order to refer to new concepts, as opposed to the Croatian belief that it was more desirable to name these new concepts using Slavic words, either adopted (usually from Czech) or created. Indeed, the general perception of Croats as linguistic purists vs. the Serbs as internationalists, which exists even today, arose during this period. But as Herrity shows in his examination of Serbian attitudes to this question,⁴⁰ purism is a relative concept. Serbs were also resistant to "excessive foreign influence," especially Germanisms that were perceived as emanating from Zagreb and its Germanized society. In short, there was a tension between the perception of Serbian and Croatian as "one and the same" and the clear awareness of differences. A very interesting (and eerily prescient) instance is the response of a philologist and teacher to the replacement of Serbian textbooks by Croatian ones in the gymnasium (high school) of Sremski Karlovci.⁴¹ He affirms that he has nothing against the Croatian language or books written by Croatian experts. He also says he believes Serbian schools would indeed use Croatian textbooks if they were written in the pure and correct language that Serbs write and speak ("kad bi ove bile napisane onim čistim i korektnim jezikom, kojim se u nas govori i piše").⁴² Indeed, he says, although these languages are essentially one and the same, there are still many differences; and it is these differences, and especially the strong Germanisms—which in his opinion are particularly characteristic of Croatian books—that damage the purity of the Serbian language. This one instance encapsulates the overall paradox of the language issue: Serbian and Croatian are close enough to be essentially "the same," yet they are clearly different.

⁴⁰ Peter Herrity, "Puristic Attitudes in Serbia in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Slavonic and East European Review* 56, no. 2 (1978), 202–223.

⁴¹ F. Oberknežević, "Hrvatske školske knjige u gimnaziji karlovačkoj," *Letopis Matice srpske* 130 (1882), 92–116 (cited in Herrity, "Puristic Attitudes," 215–217).

⁴² Cited in Herrity, "Puristic Attitudes," 216.

And What about Bosnia-Herzegovina?

So far the discussion has focused on Serbian and Croatian identity and its ties with language. Indeed, this must be the central focus of any such discussion, since the idea of Yugoslav unity has always depended upon a functioning coalition between Serbs and Croats. It also certainly appears to be the case that each of these two peoples thought only in binary terms—themselves versus “that other.” What, then, about the third distinct group which spoke “the same” language, the inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina? It is true that the area was populated by a sizeable number of Serbs, as well as a lesser number of Croats, but there was also a large group of Muslims, descendants of Slavic inhabitants who had converted to Islam during Ottoman times. Here too, however, both Croats and Serbs thought essentially in terms of themselves. That is, they viewed the Muslims as essentially Serbs or Croats, respectively, a fact clearly demonstrated by the wording of history and geography textbooks of the time.⁴³ Any sense of Muslim identity these “renegades” might have acquired over the centuries was viewed as an incidental overlay from the past. Bosnian Muslims, by contrast, took their religious identity very seriously, partly for obvious (and inherent) cultural reasons, and partly because the Ottoman state of which they were part until 1878 had grouped its subject peoples not by nationality but by religion.

There was thus a third identity to be reckoned with, a Bosnian one. Furthermore, the extent to which Bosnian identity can (or should) be equated with Muslim identity is hard to define. As opposed to Serbian and Croatian identities, both of which are constructed on the basis of a strong sense of shared history, Bosnian identity is primarily connected with a sense of physical place. Serbs and Croats each saw (and see) themselves as the heirs of a medieval kingdom, but in each case the physical borders of that kingdom had been completely erased, such that only cultural memory remained. Bosnia, however, retained its physical borders more or less unchanged since medieval times: the ruling powers had changed, but the place remained. In this sense, therefore, to be Bosnian meant not so much to carry one or another political or ethnic identity but rather to live in a particular land as one of many different groups, a land which had

⁴³ Charles Jelavich, *South Slavic Nationalisms: Textbooks and Yugoslav Union before 1914* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990).

acquired a reputation over the centuries of being exotic, mysterious, and incomprehensible to all but Bosnians themselves.

It was this complex cultural situation that the Austro-Hungarian administrator, Benjamin Kállay (1839–1903), encountered when he arrived in Bosnia in 1882. A historian of Slavic peoples by training, Kállay was fascinated by the cultural situation he found, and he embarked upon a concerted program to create a sense of Bosnian identity, or *bošnjaštvo*. He did this partly by founding periodicals and other cultural organs but primarily through establishing “Bosnian” as the official language of administration and instruction in the schools. But unlike the other Austro-Hungarian minister (Khuen-Héderváry), who clearly sought to sow discord between Serbs and Croats, Kállay sought to create a sense of unity.⁴⁴ His primary political goal, of course, was to further the interests of the Congress of Berlin that had created the Protectorate in the first place—namely, to minimize Russian influence in the Balkans. Consequently, he sought to create distance between the Serbs and Russia, and this he did by furthering rapprochement among the several different Slavic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina, through what would today be called language planning.

Upon first arriving in 1878, the Habsburg administrators designated the local language “Croatian,” but this was soon changed to the more neutral term *zemaljski jezik* (*Landsprache*, or “local language”). Under Kállay, this name was changed to *zemaljski bosanski jezik* (“local Bosnian language”) and finally simply to *bosanski jezik* (“Bosnian language”). Kállay first set up a language commission to gather information about the local situation, and then he arranged to have a new grammar written for the schools, since the commission had concluded not only that the current Croatian grammars did not sufficiently correspond to the language of the population, but also that certain reading selections were offensive to the Muslim and Jewish segments of the population.⁴⁵ The new grammar, entitled *Gramatika bosanskoga jezika*, was published in 1890. Most historians believe that Kállay’s intent in ordering the grammar to be written was to impose his conception of *bošnjaštvo* on an unwilling population and in so doing to thwart local desires for South Slavic unity. According to

⁴⁴ Muhamed Šator, “Jezička politika u vrijeme Austro-Ugarske,” in *Jezik u Bosni i Hercegovini*, ed. Svein Mønnesland (Sarajevo: Institut za jezik; Oslo: Institut za istočnoevropske i orijentalne studije, 2005), 321–344.

⁴⁵ According to Šator (“Jezička politika,” 327), the grammars used at that time were by Veber-Tkalčević and Divković. These would probably have been Adolfo Veber Tkalčević, *Slovnica hrvatska za srednja učilišta*, 3rd ed. (Zagreb, 1876); and Mirko Divković, *Hrvatske gramatike I. dio: Oblici* (Zagreb, 1879).

this view, Kállay assigned the task of writing the grammar to the Sarajevo high school teacher Franjo Vuletić, who subsequently refused to have his authorship acknowledged on the title page in protest over the language name “Bosnian.”⁴⁶ Bosnian linguists, however, have countered that Kállay’s goals in sponsoring the grammar were fully in the interest of the local population,⁴⁷ and new archival research has supported this claim, showing not only that Vuletić was only one of a collective authorship (which accounts for the absence of his name on the title page), but also that Kállay consulted (and listened to) respected linguists on the matter.⁴⁸ Namely, the language that was codified in the grammar was the same “southern dialect” (*južno narječje*) that Vuk and Daničić had proposed and that had been accepted as the literary standard in both Croatia and Serbia. Furthermore, whereas this dialect was somewhat foreign both to many Croats (especially those in Zagreb, whose native speech was kajkavian) and to Serbs (whose native speech was ekavian), the Vukovian norm corresponded almost exactly to the native speech in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This should be of no surprise, of course, since the Vukovian norm was itself based on an East Herzegovinian dialect.

The primary bone of contention appears to be the name “Bosnian.” The received belief among historians is that Kállay invented both the term and the corresponding “language” in order to drive a wedge between Serbs and Croats by favoring Muslims;⁴⁹ they cite as partial evidence the artificiality and unnaturalness of the language of Bosnian official documents of the time. In fact, however, these beliefs seem to be unfounded. First, the name was not newly invented; rather, it had been used for centuries among a wide range of the population (that is, not just Muslims). This usage has been well-documented, as has the existence of a particular script called

⁴⁶ This is the interpretation of Tomislav Kraljačić, “Kalajeva jezička politika u Bosni i Hercegovini,” *Književni jezik* 11, no. 4 (1982), 165–177 (reprinted in Senahid Halilović, *Bosanski jezik, drugo dopunjeno i izmijenjeno izdanje* [Sarajevo: Baština, 1998], 189–205), which has been accepted and repeated by others (including myself in earlier writings on this issue).

⁴⁷ Dževad Jahić, “Uloga *Bosanskoga jezika* u procesima srpskohrvatske standardizacije,” *Pregled* 2 (1987), 245–257 (reprinted in Halilović, *Bosanski jezik*, 207–223).

⁴⁸ Miloš Okuka, “O kodifikaciji ‘bosanskog’ jezika,” *Književni jezik* 15, no. 1 (1986). Cited, and discussed in detail, in Šator, “Jezička politika,” 326ff.

⁴⁹ This view is still held by many prominent non-Muslim Bosnian linguists. See Milan Šipka, “Standardizacija jezika i jezička politika u Bosni i Hercegovini 1918–1970,” in Mønnesland, *Jezik u Bosni i Hercegovini*, 407–434. His view (expressed on p. 407) is that the standardization of Bosnian took place under pressure from occupying forces whose goal was to separate (at least symbolically) the language of Bosnians from the overall linguistic unity they shared with Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro.

bosančica (a variety of Cyrillic cursive). Second, it is clear from the grammar itself that the language being described is not some new invention, but is precisely that of Vuk and Daničić. Consequently, by sponsoring a grammar that corresponded to the language spoken by all three groups in Bosnia—Serbs, Croats, and Muslims—Kállay was acting in accord with the growing sense of Yugoslavism, not counter to it. Finally, the language of official documents, which historians claim (rightly) to be artificial and unnatural, is not that of native Bosnians but rather of foreign administrators who had never learned the language properly. One indisputably positive result of Kállay's educational efforts was the very rapid increase in literacy and cultural awareness in a population that until then had had little contact with modern European civilization. What bothered so many at the time (and apparently still does today) was simply the use of the name "Bosnian" instead of some combination of Serbian and Croatian.

At the same time, it appears clear that the name "Bosnian" was popular primarily among Muslims: there is ample evidence that most Serbs, as well as some Croats, objected strongly to it. After Kállay's death in 1903, his successor paid more attention to these objections. He eventually decided that it would be prudent to ban the name "Bosnian" and henceforth to call the language Serbo-Croatian (he did add a proviso allowing those who wished to continue using the term "Bosnian" locally to do so, and a number of Muslim organizations took advantage of this). This ruling was made in late 1907. The Bosnian grammar was reprinted once more with its original title in early 1908, and then reprinted again in 1911, with content unchanged, as *Gramatika srpsko-hrvatskog jezika*.

Language and Identity on the Eve of the Twentieth Century

At the turn of the twentieth century, therefore, there were four distinct identities that could be associated with the idea of a language. Two of them, Croatian and Serbian, were well-established and indisputable. Bosnian identity was a more complex (and continually disputed) phenomenon; nevertheless, despite the desire of both Serbs and Croats to dismiss its existence, it must be reckoned with. Finally, something like a "Yugoslav" identity also indisputably existed, even though it too is harder to define at this point than either "Serbian" or "Croatian."

Croatian identity is based on the idea of a rich, Western-oriented cultural heritage encompassing artistic and literary output in many different forms of the language, all of which are valued and revered for their beauty

and expressiveness. The fact that each of these different language types is associated with its own geographical space and unique set of cultural views is less important than the idea that they all express some aspect of "Croatianness." The achievement of the Illyrians was to bring a sense of unity to these multiple regional identities. Even though Croats at the turn of the century still did not feel they had achieved the expression of the Croatian language that best corresponded to this identity, they now had a firm sense of "the Croatian language" as the most powerful expression of that identity.

Serbian identity is based on the idea of direct continuity from a medieval state of great power and glory, and on the Orthodox faith that functioned as a bulwark during the long period of occupation by a Muslim conqueror. As a result of this foreign conquest, Serbs were widely dispersed across the land, and although their newly independent country was on the verge of regaining much of what it considered its ancestral lands, Serbs were acutely conscious that many of their countrymen now lived beyond their borders. The achievement of Vuk Karadžić was to bring a sense of unity through awareness that the same language was spoken in all the places where Serbs lived. The language was beautiful and loved, both for the folk poetry that kept Serbian medieval glory alive and for the connection between the Orthodox Church and its tradition of writing. At the turn of the century, Serbs felt they had come into a place of their own, and all that remained was to be united with the remainder of their countrymen.

Bosnian identity is based on the sense of a place that has kept its geographical integrity since medieval times, through different regimes, and is now home to several different peoples, all of whom feel that the idea of "Bosnia," inscrutable though it may be, is indisputably part of who they are. Since Bosnia was the center of "Turkey in Europe" for several centuries, the Islamic heritage makes up a significant part of Bosnia's mystery; but it is by no means the only part. All the elements of the rich mix of South Slavic cultures lived together in Bosnia, in relative tolerance if not in complete harmony. It is hard to tell what Bosnians as a group felt about the language issue at the turn of the century, especially since the short-lived status of Bosnian as an officially named language had been the work of a foreign administrator. Whatever the language was called, however, there was a clear awareness that all the inhabitants of this multicultural region spoke the same language, and this was in tune with the growing desire for a new South Slavic state.

Yugoslav identity is the most abstract of all, yet the name which labels it is highly concrete. It means "South Slav"—that is, a union of South Slavs

in their own state which is not subservient to any foreign power. This idea had been inherent in both of the Romantic language reform movements, but it was only at the turn of the century, once the same basic language had been established as the language of the people among each of the three groups noted above, that it began to look like a feasible goal. Despite regional differences and certain dissatisfactions, everyone who felt a sense of Yugoslav identity knew that the fact of a common language was its most basic underlying principle.

Towards Yugoslav Unity: The First Attempt

By the second decade of the twentieth century, the end of the empires was clearly in sight, and support for the Yugoslav idea was very strong. On the linguistic front, the sense that the language was somehow one outweighed the palpable differences. The differences of which everyone was most conscious—other than variations in vocabulary due both to different histories and different approaches to the incorporation of modernized terms—were the ekavian/ijekavian split, and the fact of two different alphabets. Each of these two elements had a history of its own. As outlined above, the one point in Vuk's program that was never accepted by Serbs was ijekavian pronunciation (and spelling). Even though ijekavian was the native speech of a sizeable number of Serbs (and all Montenegrins), the cultural weight both of church tradition and of the Belgrade-*Novi Sad* axis worked resolutely in favor of ekavian. By contrast, Croats had by now embraced ijekavian fully, despite the fact that relatively few of them spoke it natively (a large number were ikavian speakers; furthermore many speakers of čakavian, and all speakers of kajkavian, spoke ekavian). Indeed, by the time of the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913, ijekavian had become a linguistic marker of Croatian identity, partly as a matter of ironic pride at being “more Vukovian than Vuk's own countrymen,” and partly simply to emphasize the distinction from Serbs. With respect to alphabets, the distinction was also clear: Serbs used the Cyrillic alphabet and Croats used the Latin alphabet. Each now had some familiarity with the other alphabet, in that the Cyrillic alphabet had been taught in Croatian schools since 1861,⁵⁰ and although the Latin alphabet was not taught regularly in Serbian elementary schools until 1914, students in advanced

⁵⁰ Jelavich, *South Slavic Nationalisms*, 45.

courses learned it to study Latin or Western languages.⁵¹ Furthermore, thanks to the spelling reforms of Gaj and Vuk, respectively, there was an almost perfect one-to-one correspondence of the letters, such that one could move easily from one alphabet to the other.

But although the alphabet situation may have been straightforward by 1912, the path to get there had been complex. Throughout their history, Croats had used three different alphabets, each of which had a particular cultural meaning for them. The original Old Church Slavonic alphabet called Glagolitic was used, in a version adapted to Croatian usage, by clergymen in Dalmatia to emphasize the fact that their religion was Slavic (and not Roman) but still Catholic (and not Orthodox); this alphabet remained in use until the early twentieth century and has been recently revived, though only in a symbolic manner. The Cyrillic alphabet was used by Croats (Catholics) in Bosnia, in a particular adaptation called *bosančica* which served to differentiate it from the Orthodox Cyrillic used by Serbs. The Latin alphabet, which was used alongside both of these, gradually predominated. Given that the Latin alphabet had not been explicitly created to render Slavic sounds, however (as had Glagolitic, and its subsequent adaptation to Greek letters, which became known as Cyrillic), it existed in a number of ad hoc variants, none of which were really adequate to the task, and the proliferation of which was an obstacle to unity. This is why one of Gaj's major efforts had been to reformulate the Latin alphabet—creating new letters as necessary to render specific Slavic sounds—and to establish a consistent relationship between sounds and letters.

Vuk's task was similar. Even though the Slavic alphabet had originally been developed to render Slavic sounds, it was still not ideal. Furthermore over the centuries it had come to incorporate certain Greek letters as well; although these letters served little practical function, their usage had become a matter of tradition. Thus, although there was only one alphabet and spelling system in use (as opposed to many in Croatia), there was a proliferation of symbols, and an inadequate representation of actual speech. Because this alphabet was so closely identified with Orthodox tradition, however, some of Vuk's bitterest battles with the clerical elite concerned the alphabet. It was not only that he proposed the elimination of nineteen letters; such a proposal had been made some years earlier.⁵²

⁵¹ Ibid., 37.

⁵² Sava Mrkalj, *Salo debeloga jera libo azbukoprotres* (Budim: Kraljevsko sveučilište, 1810).

The greatest outcry was caused by the six letters he proposed to add, and especially by his most farsighted reform, one which made the Cyrillic alphabet in Serbia a better representation of Slavic speech than anywhere else in the Slavic Orthodox world. This was the introduction of the letter *j*, a sound which until then was spelled different ways depending both on its position in the word and on adjacent sounds (as it is even today in other Cyrillic alphabets). To the clergy, this letter was anathema because it was from the Latin alphabet, and therefore represented the hated Roman Catholic church; many even suspected Vuk of being an Austrian Catholic secret agent. In the end, Vuk's alphabet prevailed, and although there was still not complete harmony among Croats about the most optimal spelling, the version of Gaj's spelling put forth in Broz's Croatian orthography of 1892 corresponded very closely to Vuk's, such that it was now possible, and easy, to write Croatian in Cyrillic letters and Serbian in Latin letters.

It is against this background that one must view the proposal made in 1912 by Pero Slijepčević (1888–1964), which was taken up and publicized in 1913 by the highly influential Serbian man of letters, Jovan Skerlić (1877–1914), a strong proponent of the Yugoslav idea and of the formation of a unified South Slavic state.⁵³ Believing that a clearly unified language was necessary for the survival of this state, he proposed an exclusively ekavian form of the language, to be written exclusively in Latin letters. Responses to a survey concerning this proposal were mixed: many writers accepted the idea, but a number of leading grammarians did not. Croats were unwilling to abandon ijekavian, particularly after all the effort they had put in to acquire it; and although the Serbian elite had been using both alphabets for nearly a generation, the vast majority of Serbs were comfortable only with Cyrillic, and it is likely that they would have strongly resisted the loss of an alphabet which for them was inextricably tied with their religious identity. Nevertheless, a number of leading Croat authors did write in ekavian during the first few years of the new Yugoslav state, at least as long as the euphoria lasted.

The language of the new state was essentially the same Vukovian-based language that had been officially codified in the Broz orthography of 1892, the Maretić grammar of 1899, and the Broz-Iveković dictionary of 1901. Prior to the formation of the new state in December 1918, the official name of that language in Croatia was "Croatian or Serbian," an action

⁵³ Šator, "Jezička politika," 339.

approved by the Croatian Parliament in 1867; and in Bosnia-Herzegovina it was "Serbo-Croatian," a name which came formally into use after the official repudiation of the name "Bosnian" in 1907. Both actions had been taken in recognition of the presence of (indeed, on the insistence of) Serb inhabitants of these regions; in the latter instance, Croat inhabitants also were involved. In Serbia, the name of the language had continued to be "Serbian," with the understanding that it was "essentially" the same as the language in neighboring regions. Now, however, the official language of the new state, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, bore the unwieldy name Serbo-Croato-Slovene (*srpsko-hrvatsko-slovenački*). The tripartite form of the name was based on the equally unwieldy assumption that the three named ethnic groups were three "tribes" of a single people. This version of the Yugoslav ideal, according to which the superordinate unity among peoples would eventually prevail over the inherited, subordinate differences, was similar in conception to the Illyrian ideal—and equally unworkable in practice. But whereas the Illyrian name had the advantage of non-ethnic breadth, this one named three individual ethnic groups (while omitting several others), the effect of which was to direct attention more to the gaps between them that had to be bridged rather than to common features which unified them. This "disparity" was rectified in 1929 when the country's name was changed to Yugoslavia, but by that time the gaps were widening into chasms. That is, the desire for cultural unity in the abstract was great, but the practical implementation of it was difficult.

Slovenes, for instance, supported the Yugoslav idea. For centuries they had been defending themselves against cultural encroachment from Austrians to the north and Italians to the west, and they clearly felt more kinship with their Slavic brethren to the south and east. Indeed, during the Illyrian period they had considered relinquishing their language and adopting "Illyrian" (though in the end they did not do so). But when asked now whether they would be willing to give up their language and adopt that of these more numerous neighbors, they showed little enthusiasm: most respondents to a 1913 survey conducted by the influential Slovene journal *Veda* observed that even if Slovenian elements were included into such a language, the result would be unworkable. When the language of the new state nevertheless proclaimed itself to be such an amalgam, Slovenes dutifully learned it in school as a second language. For all other purposes, however, they continued to use their own language, more or less as they had done under the Habsburgs, and the Belgrade government made no effort to coerce them to do otherwise.

The Interwar Period

The situation with the Croats was quite different. They too had become used to using their own version of the “Croatian or Serbian” language, believing that it was enough to have adopted the basically Vukovian framework. Now, however, the political and administrative center was no longer a German-speaking Vienna which allowed them to use their own language for all practical purposes, but a Slavic-speaking Belgrade which considered its version of the common “Croatian or Serbian” language to be the official one. This meant that the language of anything connected with state administration, such as schooling, the courts, the military and the like, was Serbian; and the expectation was that Croats would adapt to this in the interest of national unity. Already one can see the crux of the Yugoslav dilemma in the contrast of Serb and Croat expectations—and not just about language. The initial euphoria had indeed been real and was grounded in expectations that were, at least from each side’s point of view, reasonable. The Serbs of Serbia proper were delighted to be in the same state with their Serb brethren who until then had lived under Austrian or Ottoman rule. Having endured so many centuries of separation, they saw as their primary goal the incorporation of the other peoples living in the territory of the new state into a solid and stable political unit. For their part, many (though by no means all) Croats were pleased to be part of a Slavic state, as equal partners with closely related brother peoples with whom they shared a common language. Having endured so many centuries of fragmentation, as well as subordination to another more powerful entity, they saw as their primary goal the development of a model of shared governance that assured equal rights, and a certain autonomy, to each partner. In short, the Serbs envisioned a strongly unified state in which they played the dominant role, while the Croats envisioned a looser federation in which no one party played a dominant role. The incompatibility between these two sets of expectations haunted the country like a specter from its beginning to its end.

Much of this frustration was worked out at the level of language. Linguists and educators now became obsessed with orthography, and with minute distinctions (within what was basically a Vukovian framework) along the cline from strict phonological spelling to more etymological spelling. The classic Broz orthographic manual of 1892 had been reissued several times under the authorship of Dragutin Boranić (1870–1955), who took over the task upon Broz’s death. Now, the latest edition of 1921,

entitled *Pravopis hrvatskoga ili srpskoga jezika*,⁵⁴ though still essentially Vukovian, became a marked symbol of Croatian identity. This is because it was perceived as a bastion of resistance to the Belgrade-based *Pravopis srpskohrvatskoga književnog jezika*, published in 1923 under the authorship of the eminent Serbian linguist Aleksandar Belić (1876–1960). Where Boranić modified Vuk's principles slightly in the direction of etymology (for instance, allowing the written form *radit ću* instead of *radiću*, as in speech), Belić went further towards the phonological than even Vuk had done (thus prescribing *gratski* instead of *gradski*, which Vuk had allowed). Since the avowed goal of Belić and other leading Serbian philologists was to create a truly unified language by eliminating what they saw as "outmoded regional usage," this manual was seen by Croats as an assault on their ethnic identity.

Up until this point, Croatian identity had been largely a concern of the elites. Now, however, the charismatic leader of the Croatian Peasant Party, Stjepan Radić (1871–1928), carried the banner to all levels of Croatian society and became the symbol of Croatian resistance to Serbian unitarism. When a Montenegrin deputy shot the immensely popular Radić on the floor of Parliament in Belgrade on June 20, 1928, the assassination sent shock waves throughout the country.⁵⁵ As a result of the ensuing political crisis, the king abolished the constitution and created a royal dictatorship, in the process changing the name of the country to Yugoslavia; the date of the proclamation, January 6, 1929, is still mentioned by Croats with bitterness. One of the many new decrees was orthographic. Soon after the assassination, and thus at a moment when Serb-Croat relations were extremely strained, the Ministry of Education appointed a commission to devise a uniform Serbo-Croat orthography. Although the commission included several eminent Croatian linguists, what prevailed, as in the Vienna Agreement, was the Serbian view. In June 1929, therefore, this manual (essentially equivalent to Belić's 1923 orthography—ekavian and highly phonological) was required for use in all schools throughout the land.⁵⁶ Although the new regime was repressive in many ways, the matter of spelling and orthography once again became a national-ethnic lightning

⁵⁴ This edition was reissued in 1923, and again in 1926 and 1928.

⁵⁵ Radić clung to life for several more weeks but succumbed to the gunshot wound on August 8, 1928.

⁵⁶ Božidar Maksimović, *Pravopisno uputstvo za sve osnovne, srednje i stručne škole u Kraljevini Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*.

rod, crystallizing the anger of both sides. Croats resented Serbs for imposing Serbian culture upon them against their will, and Serbs resented Croats for placing so many obstacles in the way of national unity.

Yet despite the many problems of the country (including the assassination of the king himself in 1934, by Croat and Macedonian terrorists), many still believed in the Yugoslav idea and tried to look to what united them rather than what divided them. Cultural life was active, and many outstanding writers, especially the two giants for whom Yugoslavia became known, Ivo Andrić (1892–1975) and Miroslav Krleža (1893–1981), established their reputations in this interwar period. Neither got involved in linguistic disputes; each simply produced masterful works in what was the same language, but embellished with the richness of expression of each author's home region—Bosnia in the case of Andrić (though he had moved to Belgrade and wrote consistently in ekavian), and Croatia in the case of Krleža. Indeed, it was Krleža who later summed up the entire language issue in the simple sentence “The ‘Croatian or Serbian language’ is a single language, which the Croats have always called Croatian and the Serbs Serbian” (“Hrvatski ili srpski jezik su jedan jezik, koji su Hrvati uvijek nazivali hrvatskim, a Srbi srpskim”).⁵⁷

In 1936 Krleža published the work for which he is best known and loved among Croats, *The Ballads of Petrica Kerempuh* (Balade Petrice Kerempuha). This is a series of poems in which a folk character describes, from the point of view of the common man, the sufferings and fate of the Croatian people from the days of feudalism up through the mid-nineteenth century. The tone is alternately humorous and tragic, and the language is kajkavian. But—and this is the point—it is not the kajkavian of everyday Zagreb nor of the surrounding countryside. Rather, it is a stylized, invented (and highly inventive) kajkavian, a vision of what kajkavian could have become had it remained the literary language of the Croats; indeed, the centerpiece of the book is a long, bitter, elegiac piece about the funeral of “KAJ.” Both the content and the form of the book struck deep chords with the Croatian public, especially as the year of its publication was the centennial of the Illyrian decision to abandon kajkavian in favor of štokavian. The reactions were emotional, of course. Croat linguists knew well that the only reasonable choice had been to adopt štokavian: to have required

⁵⁷ Cited in Mladen Čaldarović, “Krleža: ‘Otkad pišem, pišem hrvatski,’” in *Deklaracija o nazivu i položaju hrvatskoga književnog jezika: Građa za povijest Deklaracije*, ed. Jelena Hekman, 3rd ed. (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1997), 75.

Croats throughout Dalmatia, Slavonia and western Bosnia to learn a dialect that was extremely foreign to them would not have achieved the cultural unity the Illyrians sought. Nevertheless, the depth of admiration and emotional resonance which Krleža's masterwork evoked among Croats in 1936 (as it still does even today) offers a very clear insight into the bond between language and identity among educated Croats.

It had been clear for some time that Yugoslavia as a state could survive only if some sort of internal autonomy could be granted to Croatia. A solution to this problem was reached in late August 1939, just days before the Nazi invasion of Poland. This was the *Sporazum* (Agreement),⁵⁸ which created the Banovina of Croatia, an autonomous self-governing state within Yugoslavia. Almost immediately, Boranić's pre-1929 orthography was reissued. More significantly, there appeared in 1940 a monograph entitled *Differences between the Croatian and Serbian Literary Languages* (*Razlike između hrvatskoga i srpskoga književnog jezika*), the authors of which were two as yet unknown linguists, Petar Guberina (1913–2005) and Kruno Krstić (1905–1987). The book consisted primarily of two long lists, one of Croatian words not used in Serbia and the other of Serbian words not used in Croatia, and was preceded by an essay defining the concept of a "literary language."⁵⁹ The booklet was widely acclaimed among Croats, who read it both as justification for, and an important step on the way towards, a separate linguistic identity. As Ham notes, these two authors "made the first step towards the re-Croatization of the de-Croatized [language]" ("prvi su korak u smjeru pohrvaćivanja rashvaćenoga učinili [P.G. i K.K.])."⁶⁰ The book was republished at least twice, as proof that the basis for a separate Croatian language had been recognized as early as 1940.⁶¹ Serbs attacked it sharply for its bias (as they do even now),⁶²

⁵⁸ It is usually referred to as the Cvetković-Maček *Sporazum*, since the agreement was concluded between the Yugoslav Prime Minister Dragiša Cvetković and the Croat politician Vladko Maček (who took pride in spelling his name etymologically as Vladko, and not phonologically as Vlatko!).

⁵⁹ Petar Guberina and Krune Krstić, *Razlike između hrvatskoga i srpskoga književnog jezika* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1940).

⁶⁰ Sanda Ham, *Povijest hrvatskih gramatika* (Zagreb: Globus, 2006), 187.

⁶¹ It was reprinted in full in 1977 (Mainz: Liber Croaticus Verlag), and part 1 was reprinted in 1997 (*Jezik* 44, no. 5, 162–191).

⁶² In his chapter on the lexicon ("Leksika," in *Srpski jezik na kraju veka*, ed. Milorad Radovanović [Belgrade: Institut za srpski jezik SANU, 1996], 37–86), Ivan Klajn (p. 39) calls it "clearly the worst pseudo-study" of this sort ("u tom pogledu svakako je najgora pseudostudija P. Guberine i K. Krstića"). Even Banac, who is clearly sympathetic to the Croatian cause, admitted that "not all their choices were good or convincing" ("Main Trends," 244).

pointing out that many of the words identified as “Croatian” were used by Serbs as well and that many of the words identified as “Serbian” were archaic or dialectal. In an interview given five decades later, published under the title “Politics Has Swallowed up Language” (*Politika je progutala jezik*), Guberina claimed that he had always viewed Croatian and Serbian as two variants of a single language (what were later to be the “western” and “eastern” variants), that he and Krstić had made the lists for their private use and not for publication, and that their intent was not to justify a separate Croatian language but to protest the extent to which Belgrade colloquial speech had been imposed upon Croats as the only “literary language.”⁶³ At the time, however, the book served an important political purpose for the Croatian nationalist cause, and as a cornerstone for the language policies of the soon-to-be established Independent State of Croatia, policies which both Guberina and Krstić helped implement (willingly or not).

Wartime

The Nazis attacked Belgrade on April 6, 1941. They entered Zagreb four days later, on April 10, together with the Ustasha, a Croatian fascist organization, which had been waiting in Italy to come to power. The Yugoslav government capitulated a week later, and the country was dismembered. Large portions of it were taken over by Axis countries, including Germany (which, having annexed Austria three years earlier, now occupied northern Slovenia), Italy (which annexed western Slovenia and the coastal regions of Dalmatia, and which occupied Montenegro and—together with Albania—what is now Kosovo and western Macedonia), Bulgaria (which administered southern Serbia, meaning that which is now Macedonia plus a strip of southeastern Serbia), and Hungary (which occupied Međimurje in northernmost Croatia plus the Baranja region in northern Serbia). The remainder of Serbia, minus the area of Srem in the north, came under German administration; and all the rest of what was once Yugoslavia now formed the Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna država Hrvatska*, usually referred to as NDH), under Ustasha leadership. The NDH thus included not only all of Croatia excluding the northern tip,

⁶³ *Danas* 410 (December 26, 1989), later posted on the Matica hrvatska website as part of an obituary notice: [http://www.matica.hr/www/wwwizdz.nsf/AllWebDocs/galicdrugocitanje/\\$File/galic%20guberina.pdf/galic%20guberina.pdf](http://www.matica.hr/www/wwwizdz.nsf/AllWebDocs/galicdrugocitanje/$File/galic%20guberina.pdf/galic%20guberina.pdf).

but also all of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Srem region of northwestern Serbia. Croats were initially overjoyed to have a state of their own of such dimensions, but disillusionment and dismay soon set in when the nature of the state and its ideology became clear. What is now known as “ethnic cleansing” was rife, and Serbs were persecuted with unspeakable brutality. The totalitarian regime set out to control all aspects of life.

One of these was language. The Ustasha Leader (*Poglavnik*), Ante Pavelić (1889–1959), who had obviously been preparing for years to put his ideas into practice, began issuing orders almost immediately. On April 25, 1941, just a week after the founding of the NDH, he issued an order banning the use of Cyrillic throughout the new state,⁶⁴ and three days later he ordered the creation of the Croatian State Office for Language (*Hrvatski državni ured za jezik*). This office was charged with monitoring all public use (written and spoken) of the Croatian language, writing new textbooks and language manuals, cooperating with the state offices in the composition of language laws, and carrying out “language propaganda” (*jezična promičba*).⁶⁵ The goal of the latter was to instruct the public in the attainment of “pure” Croatian, both via various sorts of short publications and via a weekly radio program. The radio series was conducted by Guberina and Krstić, and the initial program was broadcast on May 8, 1941. The next day the newspaper *Hrvatski narod* described the series in some detail and identified its goal as the “raising of Croatian linguistic consciousness” among the people, and especially the “cleansing of the language” of unwanted Serbian elements (“svrha je tome tečaju buđenje hrvatske jezične svijesti u najširim narodnim krugovima, a posebno čišćenje književnog jezika od nametnutih srbizama”).⁶⁶ Written announcements, which appeared in various publications (by government order, these were printed at the cost of the editors themselves) were of the “language adviser” genre, instructing the public in correct usage (and primarily in the avoidance of words and expressions which were perceived to be Serbian).⁶⁷ Some, however, took the form of orders, banning the use of particular words in the public arena and announcing the required replacement.

⁶⁴ Marko Samardžija, *Hrvatski jezik u Nezavisnoj državi Hrvatskoj* (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 1993), 40.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 16–17.

⁶⁶ *Hrvatski narod*, May 9, 1941, quoted in Samardžija, *Hrvatski jezik*, 17.

⁶⁷ For a collection of these announcements, see Marko Samardžija, *Jezični purizam u NDH: Savjeti Hrvatskoga Državnoga ureda za jezik* (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 1993).

But it was in the area of orthography that the Ustasha made their most noteworthy (if not lasting) mark. On June 23, 1941, they issued a statement asserting that Croatian spelling must correspond to the “spirit of the Croatian language” (*odgovarati duhu hrvatskoga jezika*) and must therefore be etymological. Several specific instances were cited, all of which seemed to suggest simply a return to a pre-1892, more “Illyrian” state of affairs. But then on August 14, 1941, they issued what Samardžija calls “undoubtedly the key document of Ustasha language legislation” (“nedvojbeno ključni dokument ustaškoga jezičnog zakonodavstva”), the Legal Order concerning the Croatian language, its purity, and its spelling (“Zakonska odredba o hrvatskom jeziku, o njegovoj čistoći, i o pravopisu”).⁶⁸ With reference to orthography, this document stated that reflexes of long *jat*’ (the *ije* of ijekavian words) must henceforth be written *ie*, followed by the famous phrase “Na hrvatskom se jeziku ima pisati po korienskom, a ne po zvučnom pravopisu” (“Croatian must be written according to a root-related, and not phonological, orthography”). The word *korienski* (from *korijen*, “root”) has since come to epitomize Ustasha language policy (ironically enough, the root of the word itself does not derive from the old *jat*’, but since it had been [mistakenly] included in Vuk’s original dictionary in that form, it was now so perceived). Since the Ustasha were quite strict about their orders (and swift to mete out punishment for disobedience), everyone tried to comply with this order. But the result was chaos, partly because there were many other sequences of *ije* in the language that did not derive from long *jat*’ (such as the *ije* in verbs like *pijem* “I drink”), and partly because of lack of clarity as to just what “root-related” meant. After much discussion of these issues among linguists, a commission began work, and the small book called *Koriensko pisanje* appeared in late August 1942.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Samardžija, *Hrvatski jezik*, 33.

⁶⁹ *Koriensko pisanje* (Zagreb: Hrvatski državni ured za jezik, 1942). A reprint of the 1944 edition of this book was published in Zagreb in 1992 under the title *Hrvatski korijenski pravopis*. The title page of the original reads “*Hrvatski pravopis*, obradio je Ured za hrvatski jezik” (*Croatian Orthography*, compiled by the Office for the Croatian Language) and carries the notice “Ova je knjiga izrađena na temelju §7 provedbene naredbe k zakonskoj odredbi o hrvatskom jeziku broj U.M. 1499–1942 od 27. lipnja 1942., a ima se upotrebljavati i kao školska knjiga odlukom Ministarstva narodne prosvjete broj 85142 od 3. studenoga 1943.” (“This book was prepared on the basis of paragraph 7 of the implementation injunction of the legal decree 1499–1942 on the Croatian language issued June 27, 1942, and it is to be used in school instruction as well, according to Decree 85142 of the Ministry of Education, issued on November 3, 1943.”)

Citizens were given until January 1, 1943, to learn the rules, after which full compliance was expected.⁷⁰

Ustasha language policy was also quite clear about the “purity” of the Croatian language. In practical terms, this meant above all rooting out perceived Serbianisms, including internationalisms that were used in Serbian. These undesirable words were to be replaced by those more in the Croatian spirit. In some cases this was an imitation of the German puristic replacement (thus *radio* became *krugoval* [after *Rundfunk*]); in some cases it was a neologism altogether (thus *tramvaj* became *munjovoz*); and in some cases it was an archaic word revived and given new life. Some of these words became a more or less neutral part of Croatian after the Ustasha left power, but most of them carried the stigma of that period and were avoided. What did remain, however, was the sense of the Croatian language as something of beauty and value whose purity must be guarded. At some point in 1945, when the defeat of the Axis forces (and the end of the NDH) was clearly in sight, the Central Propaganda Bureau (Glavno ravnateljstvo za promičbu) published a pamphlet entitled “On the Correctness and Purity of the Croatian Language” (*Za pravilnost i čistoću hrvatskog jezika*).⁷¹ The introduction to this pamphlet articulates clearly Pavelić’s language goals, accuses the Serbian post-1929 regime of deliberately spoiling the beautiful Croatian language, praises the Leader for taking on the most holy task of cleansing the language, and exhorts the Croatian people to continue with this work. The remainder of the pamphlet lists the most important elements that still needed cleansing. What is significant about this text is the certainty of the authors (in the face of impending and unavoidable political defeat) that this goal could (and would) still be striven for by the Croatian people.

For Bosnia-Herzegovina, the incorporation into the NDH meant, in the bitter words of one Bosnian, the replacement of one totalitarian regime (the “Yugo-unitarist”) by another (the “national-centric”).⁷² Bosnians, with their longstanding attachment to a region whose geographical integrity had remained intact since medieval times, had deeply resented the dictatorship of King Alexander, especially the fact that his redrawing of internal boundaries had, for the first time in centuries, divided the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina into separate chunks. A number of Muslims,

⁷⁰ Samardžija, *Hrvatski jezik*, 37.

⁷¹ Ibid., 76–77. No authors are listed, nor is any date given other than the year.

⁷² “Tako je jedan totalitarni režim (jugounitaristički) zamijenjen drugim totalitarnim režimom (naciocentrističkim).” Šipka, “Standardni jezik,” 417.

in fact, welcomed the NDH as an alternative to Serbian unitarism, and Pavelić made great efforts to include them in his cadre, calling them “the flower of the Croatian people” (*cvijet hrvatskog naroda*) and Bosnia itself the “heart of Croatia” (*srce Hrvatske*).⁷³ In actual fact, however, the NDH only had limited control over Bosnia, for it was here that the real fighting of World War II took place. Although Serbia was now under German administration, Serbs loyal to the king and to the idea of a Serbo-centric Yugoslavia continued to fight on; these warriors, under the leadership of Dragutin (Draža) Mihailović (1893–1946), were known as Chetniks. The Croat Ustasha fighters (loyal to their fascist Leader, Ante Pavelić), fought not only these Chetniks but also a third group.

As is well-known, the eventual victory was won by this third group—the Partisans, under the leadership of Josip Broz (1892–1980), nicknamed “Tito.” They too, of course, were loyal to an ideology, in this case the communist cause. For Yugoslavs, however, the primary appeal of the Partisan movement was its populist nature. Foot soldiers in the movement were answerable not to King or Leader, but to themselves, the People. Furthermore, Tito promised each of the separate ethnic groups a measure of self-determination within the future state. In particular, he vowed, the future state would have four official languages—not just the Serbian and Slovenian that already existed in prewar Yugoslavia, but also Croatian and Macedonian. Croats devoted to the cause of their own language (as most were), but not to the Ustasha method of its implementation, welcomed this wholeheartedly. And of course this single action brought the Macedonians fully into Tito’s camp: they had been under what they perceived as Serbian occupation since the Second Balkan War of 1913, and under Bulgarian occupation since 1941; to finally have a sponsor in their drive for national self-determination was more important than any other consideration.

It is not completely clear what Bosnians thought at this point. It must not have been irrelevant, however, that the battle was being waged largely on their territory, and that the new state traced its beginnings to two crucial meetings that were each held in a northern Bosnian town. The first meeting of the Anti-Fascist Council of the People’s Liberation of Yugoslavia, or AVNOJ, was held in Bihać on November 26, 1942; and the fledgling state is said to have been first “founded” at the second session of AVNOJ

⁷³ Goldstein, *Hrvatska povijest*, 274. Pavelić, of course, would have followed the “korien-sko” spelling, and written the words for “flower” and “heart” *cviet* and *srđce*, respectively.

in Jajce, on November 29, 1943. It was apparently enough for Bosnians at this point that the new state would be responsible to “the people” themselves.

The first government of the new state, then called Democratic Federal Yugoslavia, was assembled in Belgrade on March 7, 1945. Later that fall, on November 29, the country was formally proclaimed a “people’s republic,” to be known as the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia. The constitution was promulgated on January 21, 1946, on the model of the Soviet Union. The country now consisted of six republics: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. Furthermore, Serbia contained within its borders two “autonomous provinces,” Vojvodina in the north and Kosovo-Metohija (whose name was simplified to Kosovo in 1974) in the south. The greatest territorial changes thus took place in Serbia, which lost full control over what had been “Old Serbia” (now the separate republic of Macedonia) and partial control over Kosovo and Vojvodina—the former an important part of its medieval empire and the latter its primary cultural base within Austria-Hungary since the early eighteenth century. At this point Serbs appeared to have accepted the boundary redistribution as a necessary step towards unity and stability; in any case, the authority Tito had gained through his war exploits (and the respect which many, though by no means all, accorded him) meant his decisions could not be questioned. Although the various ethnic groups of the new socialist country continued to see their home republics as expressions of their identity, Tito considered the division superficial: he is said to have remarked that Yugoslavia was as solid as granite and that the republican borders were only lines on the granite.⁷⁴ The new country now concentrated all its attention on recovery from the devastations of war and on learning to function within the Stalinist paradigm that had now dominated the governments of Eastern European states. In mid-1948, however, Tito broke with Stalin, and the fledgling country was left to pursue its own path—still socialist, but no longer Stalinist.

Language and Identity at Mid-Century

If we step back at this point to examine the bond between language and identity again, we see the unavoidable effects of two long and traumatic

⁷⁴ Šipka, “Standardni jezik,” 422.

world wars, an unsuccessful attempt at a unified country, and the onset of the radical social change wrought by the imposition of a communist regime. The basic sense of identity remains in each instance, but certain emphases have shifted. More significantly, whereas at the beginning of the century the bond between language and identity was in each instance somewhat idealized, by now the hard realities of the first attempt at a unified country had made each view considerably more pragmatic.

Croatian identity continued to be founded on its Western-oriented cultural heritage and pride in the beauty of a language with a rich history encompassing multiple ways of expression, all derived from a Slavic core. Now, however, there was more emphasis on purity and on the need to defend linguistic autonomy. To be sure, both elements had existed in the Habsburg period, in the struggle to maintain Croatian cultural identity in the face of Hungarian and German hegemony. But to face the same struggle against a brother people, whose language was very close to theirs, was not at all the same. Croats were acutely conscious of those Serbian linguistic elements that had been forced upon them, and perceived them as corrupting. To see their language penetrated by such elements led to deep anger and resentment, which fed naturally into the hate-filled fascist philosophy of the Ustasha.

Serbian identity continued to be based on a glorious historical past, on the Orthodox faith that had maintained them through the time of occupation, and on the spiritual unity of a people dispersed over a wide area. To this now was added the pride (and consequent suffering) of having fought four wars—two Balkan wars and two world wars—to maintain their country's integrity, and a strong sense that they had thereby earned the right to play the central role in a unified South Slavic state. Serbs were proud of a language that had been created by their hero Vuk Karadžić on the basis of the people's heritage, and which now also was modern, international, and broad enough in its scope to be the unifying medium for the land of the South Slavs. In their view, this need for unity overrode all other considerations. Regional variations existed, of course, but sooner or later other inhabitants of the unified South Slavic state would have to come to see that these regional variations could not be allowed to block the cause of unity.

Bosnian identity continued to be based on a lasting sense of place and multicultural co-existence. The action of outsiders in dissolving their centuries-old boundaries—first the Serbian dictatorship and then the Ustasha one—had shaken their sense of balance. Thoughts of a Bosnian language as such had faded into the past; what was critical now was to

have a working coalition that allowed each of the several cultural-ethnic groups in Bosnia, none of which predominated, to regain a *modus vivendi* in a stable state. The hyphenated term “Serbo-Croatian,” and the concept it represented, was for them a necessity.

Yugoslav identity continued to be based on an awareness that although the language existed in several different variants, at heart it was still one and the same language. The idea of a common Yugoslav culture, a promising dream at the start of the century, had now been sorely tested. It is unclear whether the country would have reached equilibrium had it not been engulfed by the outside forces of World War II, just as it was unclear now whether such equilibrium could be attained under a socialist government. What did seem to be clear was that it would be necessary to make “Yugoslav” identity work, one way or another, in order to maintain a balance between the Soviet East and the capitalist West. How that would be implemented on the linguistic level remained to be seen.

Towards Yugoslav Unity—The Second Attempt

The new country was to have four official languages. The *Službeni list* of December 19, 1944, stated explicitly that it was to be published in Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, and Macedonian;⁷⁵ official documents in the initial years of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (a Stalinist dictatorship) were indeed printed in all four languages. Certain other official documents, such as banknotes, were printed in the same four languages throughout the existence of Yugoslavia. The task now was to somehow bring this “tetraglossia” into daily life. The language question was not an issue in Slovenia or Macedonia: each used its own language for all internal matters, and the “other” language at the federal level. The issue of course, was the name and nature of this “other” language. In practice everyone knew that the language was essentially one but that it existed in two different forms, which (as Krleža would later say) the Serbs called Serbian and the Croats called Croatian. In addition, the new government had now explicitly called these two different forms distinct languages. Now in this newly reunited state—a state held together not only by a forceful leader implementing a centralist ideology, but also by the desire of most of its

⁷⁵ Banac renders *Službeni list* as “Official Gazette” (“Main Trends,” 247).

inhabitants that the Yugoslav ideal actually be made to function—would this be a workable situation?

In the first years of the new state, each side looked to its own linguistic affairs. In 1947, Belić, as president of the Serbian Academy of Sciences, founded the Institute for the Serbian Language (Institut za srpski jezik) within the academy; and in 1951 a group of Croat linguists founded the Croatian Philological Society (Hrvatsko filološko društvo). Each side also sponsored an influential linguistics journal without an ethnic name in its title. The one in Belgrade, founded by Belić in 1932, bore the title *Naš jezik* (Our Language), while the one in Zagreb, founded by the new society in 1952, was named simply *Jezik* (Language). In 1953, however, a survey concerning language issues was launched by the Serbian cultural society Matica srpska. The survey, in fact, was the same one that had been circulated by Skerlić in 1913 and addressed the same issue: given the country's need for unity, how can a unified form of expression acceptable to all be attained? The results of the survey were discussed in detail at a three-day meeting in Novi Sad, the conclusion of which led to the signing of the famous Novi Sad agreement on December 10, 1954. The agreement stated that the language of Serbs, Croats and Montenegrins was a single language (*jedan jezik*) and that the literary language that had developed on the basis (of that common code) around the two major centers, Belgrade and Zagreb, was uniform (*jedinstven*), with two pronunciations, ekavian and ijekavian. Furthermore, the agreement stated that both components of the language's name must always be used, that both alphabets had equal rights (*oba pisma... ravnopravna su*) and should be learned equally by both Serbs and Croats, and that both pronunciations had equal rights. The two components of the name were, of course, Serbian and Croatian; thus the language was always to be called either Serbo-Croatian (*srpskohrvatski*) or Croato-Serbian (*hrvatskosrpski*). The agreement concluded by stating that a common language (*zajednički jezik*) needed a common orthography (*zajednički pravopis*) as well as a common set of technical terms. Finally, the agreement articulated the need for a common dictionary and instructed the two relevant "Matica" institutions to carry out this task. These two institutions were Matica srpska, based in Novi Sad, and its sister organization Matica hrvatska, based in Zagreb. The word that names the organizational form, *matica*, means "queen bee"; in this instance, however, it refers to the matrix of cultural-scientific relations that are necessary to the well-being of a society. Each of these organizations was founded in Habsburg times—Matica srpska was established in Buda in 1826 and moved to Novi Sad in 1864, and Matica hrvatska was

founded in Zagreb in 1842—and each enjoyed a very high reputation among its people.

No one disputes that the Novi Sad agreement was a watershed in Yugoslav linguistic relations. As with the Vienna Agreement of 1850, however, interpretations of it differ considerably. The most influential Serbian linguist of the new generation, Pavle Ivić (1924–1999), focused on the necessity of finding solutions to the communicative needs of everyday life in a multicultural environment.⁷⁶ He also stressed the importance of the fact that the agreement accorded (and insisted upon) equal rights to each side⁷⁷—a fact that, admittedly, was a considerable improvement over the linguistic policies of 1929 associated with his teacher and predecessor, Aleksandar Belić. Croats viewing the issue in retrospect, however, speak with great bitterness. Writing in hindsight (in 1984), Banac regretted that Belgrade authorities did not permit “the natural growth of Croatian and Serbian literary languages” and observed in connection with the 1953 survey concerning linguistic unity that “once raised, the artificial question had to be solved.”⁷⁸ But Dalibor Brozović (1927–2009), the leading Croatian linguist of the new generation, spoke in 2008 of his recollections of the early 1950s, claiming that the Matica srpska survey and Novi Sad meeting were instigated in order to block actions of the Croatian Philological Society, which had announced in 1952 that it intended to produce a thorough revision of the Boranić orthography. He himself, as the youngest member of the commission entrusted with this task, was certain that the move came from “Yugo-unitaristic and Serbian nationalist circles” which had already managed to chip away at the four-language resolution of 1944.⁷⁹ This is an extreme reaction, of course, and one that may also be tinged by the bitterness of yet another war. Nevertheless, whatever support the Croats may have given to the idea at the time was short-lived. In its formal rejection of the agreement (published in 1971), the board of directors (*upravni odbor*) of Matica hrvatska stated that it had “signed the

⁷⁶ Pavle Ivić, *Srpski narod i njegov jezik* (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1971), 207.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 208ff.

⁷⁸ Banac, “Main Trends,” 247.

⁷⁹ Dalibor Brozović, “Jesu li Bečki i Novosadski ‘dogovori’ samo beznačajne epizode i činovi unitarističkog nasilja—ili jedne osnovne točke u hrvatskoj novoštokavskoj standardizaciji?” in *Identitet jezika jezikom izrečen: Zbornik rasprave s Okruglog stola o knjizi Roberta D. Greenberga Jezik i identitet na Balkanu*, ed. Anita Peti-Stantić (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2008), 33–41. His full statement reads as follows: “Kad su jugounitaristički i velikosrpski krugovi, koji su već pomalo zasjeli u organima beogradskih vlasti i već bili uspjeti pomalo anulirati avnojevske jezične odredbe, saznali što prema *Hrvatsko filološko društvo*, odlučili su to odlučno spriječiti.” *Ibid.*, 38, italics in original.

1954 agreement, despite doubts and fears that already existed at the time, in the belief that it would contribute to better relations among peoples whose literary languages stemmed from a similar dialectal base and who lived together in a federative unit.”⁸⁰

But that was still seventeen years in the future. Throughout the remainder of the 1950s, linguists worked on the joint terminology and the joint orthographies. The fact that they managed to produce both the *Pravopis srpskohrvatskog književnog jezika* (in the Cyrillic alphabet, with ekavian forms listed first followed by ijekavian ones) and the *Pravopis hrvatskosrpskoga književnog jezika* (in the Latin alphabet, with ijekavian forms listed first followed by ekavian ones) is evidence that the goals were attainable. The fact that it took them until 1960 to do so is evidence of the difficulties that needed to be overcome. A remarkable unity was indeed attained, yet each side still clung to its small defining characteristics, each of which became imbued with great symbolic importance (for instance, Croats continued to write the two components of the future tense separately as *radit ću*, while Serbs continued to write them together as *radiću*). Furthermore, there were considerable arguments about terminology, many of which had to be resolved by compromise. In particular, two terms for punctuation marks took on great significance: the word chosen for “comma” was the Croatian *zareza*, while the word chosen for “period” was the Serbian *tačka* (which Croats replaced by their own word, *točka*, the moment they rejected the Novi Sad agreement).

Curiously, no one seems to mention the group that most clearly benefited from the provisions of the Novi Sad agreement—the inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The preamble to the agreement itself does mention Montenegrins, but almost the entire focus of the endless dispute engendered by this agreement is on Serbs and Croats. Many on each side now believe that if the Novi Sad agreement had never happened and if the two literary norms had been allowed to develop naturally on their own, the commonality would still have been apparent and there would have been much less intense attention focused on each and every difference. Had that solution been chosen, citizens of Serbia would speak and read Serbian (as most of them do anyway) and learn from Serbian textbooks,

⁸⁰ Izjava Matice Hrvatske, *Jezik* 18, no. 5 (1971), 138. Original phrasing: “Matica hrvatska prihvatila je godine 1954. Novosadski dogovor, unatoč sumnjama i bojaznima koje su već tada postojale, vjerujući da on može poslužiti kao prilog boljim odnosima među narodima koji su svoje književne jezike izgradili na srodnoj dijalekatskoj podlozi i žive u federativnoj zajednici.”

while citizens of Croatia would speak and read Croatian (as most of them do anyway) and learn from Croatian textbooks. But what about citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina? In the absence of a Bosnian language and Bosnian textbooks, they would have had to choose one or the other. This would have led not only to considerable tensions within Bosnia but also to considerable interference and political manipulation from outside Bosnia, both of which would have badly damaged the balance of toleration and cooperation upon which Bosnia's survival depended. For Bosnians, the Novi Sad agreement was not only the best possible choice: it was an absolute necessity.

It is perhaps fitting, therefore, that the next significant act in the drama took place in Sarajevo in 1965, at the Fifth Congress of Yugoslav Slavists. For some time, the inadequacy of the phrase "two pronunciations" had been the subject of discussion, since everyone knew that ekavian vs. ijekavian pronunciation was not the only difference between Serbian and Croatian (indeed, it was tacitly understood that the phrase "two pronunciations" was a loose cover term for a much broader scope of linguistic features). Now the Serbian linguist Milka Ivić (1923–2011), as eminent a scholar as her husband Pavle, introduced the term "variant" in reference to the two different types of educated usage current in Belgrade and Zagreb, respectively.⁸¹ Not only did her formulation grant separate existence to two distinct norms while still regarding them as instantiations of a single language, but it also recognized that the rural model upon which the Vukovian standard had been based was no longer relevant in a modern European country. She conspicuously avoided the use of ethnic-national terms, choosing instead to speak of "eastern" and "western" variants, and suggested that general usage in each area, including the language of the press, television and film, should be taken into account in defining the appropriate norms of these variants. Her proposal sparked intense debate, especially from the Croatian linguist Ljudevit Jonke (1907–1979), who was widely regarded as the major voice on issues of Croatian norms, and who rejected the idea that anyone but Croats themselves should have a say in

⁸¹ Milka Ivić, "Problem norme u književnom jeziku," *Jezik* 12, no. 1 (1965–1966), 1–8. She is not the first Serbian scholar to have noted substantive differences between the two systems, however. Even in the interwar period of the dictatorship, such notice had been taken by Radosav Bošković ("O leksičkoj i stilskoj diferencijaciji srpskoga i hrvatskoga književnog jezika," *Naš jezik* 3, 277–282), a treatment of the subject that Klajn, "Leksika," considers to be far superior than that of Guberina and Krstić (see note 62).

how Croatian linguistic expression should be determined.⁸² Nevertheless, at least from the outside, it would appear that Ivić's proposal to recognize that the language had two clearly different and definable variants was a major step forward and should have resolved the issue.⁸³ Unfortunately, it came too late.

Cracks in the Structure of Yugoslavism

There had already been rumblings of dissatisfaction in Zagreb for some years, first about the orthography and now about the dictionary in preparation. As in the interwar years, the Croats once again complained that "equality" was a fiction and that the form of the language that was being forced upon them was essentially Serbian. But now, after nearly two decades of living under a communist government, they did not dare to speak openly about it due to fear of reprisal. A great deal changed in 1966, however, with the sudden and surprising fall from power of Aleksandar Ranković (1909–1983), Tito's second-in-command and anointed successor (and head of the secret police). Now, although the doors to freedom of speech were not yet fully open, they were at least ajar. This new freedom, coinciding with the publication of the first volumes of the joint dictionary,⁸⁴ gave the Croats their opening, and the action they took set off shock waves that continued to reverberate until the end of Yugoslavia and beyond. As a prominent historian observes, "Political and economic changes in Yugoslavia in the mid-sixties created a new atmosphere in which previously forbidden topics could now be addressed. One of these topics was clearly inter-ethnic relations, and discussions of these relations broke out in—or were politically coded as—discussion about language."⁸⁵

⁸² Ljudevit Jonke, "Problem norme u hrvatskosrpskom jeziku," *Jezik* 12, no. 1 (1965–1966), 12–13.

⁸³ Milka Ivić is generally recognized as the author of this proposal, despite Banac's statement that it was "advanced by Croat linguists" ("Main Trends," 248). It is indeed the case that the older generation of Serbian linguists rejected the proposal while most Croat linguists approved it, at least in principle.

⁸⁴ The first two volumes of the *Matica hrvatska*—*Matica srpska* dictionary were published jointly, according to plan, in 1967. The remaining four volumes were published by *Matica srpska* alone, in 1969, 1971, 1973 and 1976, respectively.

⁸⁵ Goldstein, *Hrvatska povijest*, 334. Original: "Političke i privredne promjene u Jugoslaviji sredinom šezdesetih stvaraju novu atmosferu u kojoj se počinju postavljati dotad zabranjena pitanja. Međunacionalni odnosi bili su svakako jedno od njih, a rasprave o njima prelomale su se—ili politički kodirale—kroz jezik."

In March 1967, therefore, representatives of nineteen major Croatian cultural institutions met and agreed upon a resolution that demanded active enforcement of the existing constitutional provision allowing four literary languages, and the guarantee of consistent use of the Croatian literary language in all relevant public spheres. The text of the resolution pointed out that imprecisions in the formulation of the Novi Sad agreement had made it possible for the otherwise laudable principles of that agreement to be violated, to the extent that the effective state language was Serbian while Croatian was disregarded and reduced to the status of a local dialect; from this it followed that the Croatian people were being denied the equality that was their constitutional right. This resolution, entitled "Declaration on the Name and Position of the Croatian Literary Language (Deklaracija o nazivu i položaju hrvatskoga književnog jezika), was approved by its signatories on March 13 and then sent to the Federal Parliament on March 15. It was published in the weekly Zagreb newspaper *Telegram* on March 17 and in the daily Zagreb newspaper *Vjesnik* on March 19. That same day, the Association of Serbian Writers drafted and approved a response that later became known under the title "Proposal for Consideration" (Predlog za razmišljanje).⁸⁶ In it, they acknowledged the eminence of the Croatian signatories and accepted the right of each people/nation to make decisions regarding the name and position of its own language; consequently, they also accepted the fact that both the Vienna and Novi Sad agreements were now null and void, and that both the Serbian and Croatian languages should henceforth develop independently. This being the case, they continued, the government should ban the names Croato-Serbian and Serbo-Croatian and introduce "equality of alphabets" everywhere, and grant everyone—not only all Croats living in Serbia, but also all Serbs living in Croatia—the "right to cultivate freely and without obstruction all aspects of their national culture."⁸⁷ In other words, the Serbs were calling the Croats' bluff. If Croats could claim the right to define their language and the domains in which it was to be used, then Serbs would claim the same right for Serbs everywhere—including the large population of Serbs within Croatia.

⁸⁶ It was published in Belgrade (in the daily newspaper *Borba*) only on April 2.

⁸⁷ The English versions of both the Declaration and the Proposal appeared in Christopher Spalatin, "Serbo-Croatian or Serbian and Croatian? Considerations on the Croatian Declaration and Serbian Proposal of March 1967," *Journal of Croatian Studies* 7–8 (1966–1967), 3–13.

Reaction to the Declaration in the Croatian press (which was, of course, government-controlled) was highly negative. The Declaration was seen immediately as a political (rather than a linguistic) act, and it was pointedly noted in the press that national (that is, interethnic) relations (*nacionalni odnosi*) were the concern of the Party and not of individuals.⁸⁸ Tito first reacted jokingly, remarking at a luncheon in Kosovska Mitrovica, "Our living, comrades, doesn't come from grammar or this or that dialect, but rather from the fruit of our workers, from their creative hands" ("Mi, drugovi, ne živimo od gramatike, od ovog ili onog dijalekta, već od onog što stvore stvaralačke ruke naših radnih ljudi").⁸⁹ In fact, however, he was enraged, for both the Declaration and the Proposal threatened the very basis of his program for Yugoslav unity, encoded in his famous slogan *bratstvo i jedinstvo* ("brotherhood and unity"). The next day he issued a public accusation of the writers: "They prepared this Declaration in secret and then all of a sudden stabbed [us] in the back. This can no longer be done. All of Yugoslavia is incensed by these actions, and most of all the Croatian people." ("Oni su potajno radili pripremajući Deklaraciju i iznenada udarili u leđa. Tako se kod nas više ne može raditi. Čitava Jugoslavija je danas ogorčena zbog takvih postupaka, a u prvom redu hrvatski narod.")⁹⁰ Subsequently a large number of Croatian linguists were expelled from the League of Communists (the Yugoslav term for the Communist Party), and on April 20 it was announced that the major domo of Croatian letters, Miroslav Krleža, who had been an outspoken communist since 1917 and a major force in politics his whole life, had resigned from the Central Committee of the Croatian League of Communists. His resignation was accepted without comment.⁹¹ The writers of the Proposal were equally chastised by the government. On March 31, Antonije Isaković (1923–2002), the head of the publishing house Prosveta, a member of the Central Committee of the League of Communists in Serbia and an acclaimed author, was called in to explain his actions in writing the Proposal. (Although the document was signed simply by "a group of writers," it was known that

⁸⁸ *Vjesnik*, March 19, 1967, cited in Josip Pavičić, "Hajka bez premca, Kronologija," in Hekman, *Deklaracija*, 85–94.

⁸⁹ *Vjesnik*, March 26, 1967, cited in Pavičić, "Hajka bez premca," 92.

⁹⁰ *Vjesnik*, March 27, 1967, cited in Pavičić, "Hajka bez premca," 93.

⁹¹ *Vjesnik*, April 20, 1967, cited in Pavičić, "Hajka bez premca," 94. Tito is said to have contacted Krleža before then and asked him to withdraw his signature from the Declaration, but Krleža refused (Miko Tripalo, *Hrvatsko proljeće* [Zagreb: Globus, 1989], 93; cited in Misha Glenny, *The Balkans: Nationalism, War and the Great Powers, 1804–1999* [New York: Penguin], 585).

Isaković and the literary critic Borislav Mihajlović-Mihiz [1922–1997] were its main authors.) Like Krleža, Isaković too resigned his post in the League of Communists, and a number of other writers were fired by their media employers.⁹²

After Tito's official condemnation of both sides, the entire affair seemed to die down. But it was not forgotten, nor could it be. By abrogating the principles of "brotherhood and unity" and placing the rights of one component nation above those of the Yugoslav collective, the Croats in their Declaration questioned the very foundation of the Yugoslav idea. And by doing essentially the same thing in response, putting the rights of Serbs ahead of those of the Yugoslav collective, the Serbian writers articulated a stance unprecedented in the history of Yugoslavia. This was the first time since Yugoslavia's founding that Serbian interests and Yugoslav unity were not seen to serve one another. Instead, this group appears to have realized that Yugoslav unity was a lost cause and made a move to salvage as much as possible for the Serbian cause. In Miller's pithy phrase, a "Group of Writers" had redefined Serbia.⁹³ Thus a dispute over language introduced the specter of nationalism, once again increasing the distance and distrust between the two brother nations (publicly, the discussion was about language rights, but recent history was very much on everyone's minds, and public references by Serbs to the Ustasha concentration camps of a quarter-century earlier were not uncommon).⁹⁴

The harsh Soviet response to liberalization in Czechoslovakia, and the entry of Warsaw Pact tanks and soldiers into Prague in August 1968, was a sobering reminder of the larger political reality, of the necessity for Yugoslavia to remain united, and consequently, of the limits of liberalization. But the sparks had been struck and the flame smoldered. What had started as a linguistic movement in Croatia became an openly political one: taking its inspiration from the Czech liberalization movement known as the "Prague Spring," this one was called the "Croatian Spring." Although Matica hrvatska had been shut down by government order, linguists continued to write actively. Indeed, it is striking that Tito allowed such free discussion, given the national (and hence political) issues that were so closely entwined with the linguistic argumentation. Ljudevit Jonke

⁹² Nick Miller, *The Nonconformists: Culture, Politics, and Nationalism in a Serbian Intellectual Circle, 1944–1991* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007), 125–136.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 131.

remained a senior statesman and important voice;⁹⁵ other linguists who came to the fore at this time as champions of the cause for the Croatian language included Stjepan Babić (1925–),⁹⁶ Zlatko Vince (1922–1994)⁹⁷ and Radoslav Katičić (1930–). But it was Dalibor Brozović, a linguist previously known primarily as a dialectologist, who now took center stage as the theoretician and primary proponent of the cause of Croatian as a literary language distinct from Serbian (or Serbo-Croatian). In a series of articles, Brozović analyzed in depth the definition of a “literary standard” with the goal of demonstrating that Croatian qualified in every respect. In 1970 he gathered the most important of these articles together into a single volume that became known as the touchstone of the movement.⁹⁸ One of the most important principles he espoused was what was later called the “axiological” principle.⁹⁹ According to this principle, first fully defined by Katičić,¹⁰⁰ a language qualified as a separate standard if it was *vrijedonosni* (“value-carrying”)—if it was felt to be the bearer of values that its speakers associated with their ethnic identity.

On the Serbian side, the primary voice was that of Pavle Ivić, a brilliant linguist and one of Yugoslavia’s most respected scholars, who had entered the political arena with a sharp condemnation of the Declaration¹⁰¹ and who had continued to publish shorter pieces defending the unity of Serbo-Croatian.¹⁰² His major contribution, however, was a book bearing the provocative title *The Serbian People [Nation] and Its Language* (Srpski narod i njegov jezik). Most of the book was concerned with the dialectal makeup of Serbo-Croatian (Ivić’s specialty within linguistics) and with Vuk’s work as a lexicographer. Vuk also played a major role in the

⁹⁵ Ljudevit Jonke, *Književni jezik u teoriji i praksi* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1965); Jonke, *Hrvatski književni jezik 19. i 20. stoljeća* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1971); Jonke, *Hrvatski književni jezik danas* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1971).

⁹⁶ Babić went on to co-author *Hrvatski Pravopis* (1971) and *Pregled gramatike hrvatskoga književnoga jezika* (1973).

⁹⁷ Zlatko Vince began work during this period on the monumental *Putovima hrvatskoga književnog jezika* (Zagreb: Sveučilišna naklada Liber, 1978).

⁹⁸ Dalibor Brozović, *Standardni jezik: Teorija, usporedbe, geneza, povijest, suvremena zbilja* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1970).

⁹⁹ Dubravko Škiljan, “From Croato-Serbian to Serbian: Croatian Linguistic Identity,” *Multilingua* 19, no. 1–2 (2000), 15.

¹⁰⁰ Radoslav Katičić, “Identitet jezika,” *Suvremena lingvistika* 5–6 (1972), 5–14.

¹⁰¹ Pavle Ivić, “Srpskohrvatski književni jezik i naše dužnosti,” *Polja* 13, no. 103 (1967), 1. The text was reprinted from *Polja* (a Novi Sad weekly) in the Zagreb weekly *Telegram* on April 14, 1967, and in the Belgrade weekly *Prosvetni pregled* on April 26, 1967.

¹⁰² Pavle Ivić, “Za ravnopravnost, a protiv cepanja jezika,” *Jezik* 16, no. 4 (1968–1969), 118–125.

book's most important chapter, entitled "The Destiny of Our Language as an Instrument of Culture" (*Sudbina našeg jezika kao oruđa kulture*). The first two sections of this erudite cultural history of the language are entitled, respectively, "From the Beginnings to the Times of Vuk" (*Od početaka do vukovih vremena*) and "From Vuk until Now" (*Od Vuka do danas*). But it was the third and shortest section, entitled "The Present Moment" (*Aktuelni trenutak*), that drew everyone's attention. In essence, these controversial pages restated the central ideas of the Proposal: that "the establishment of the Croatian language for Croats in Croatia must be accompanied by the establishment of the Serbian language for Serbs in that same republic, with all the ensuing consequences in schooling, government and culture" ("s konstituisanjem hrvatskog jezika za Hrvate u Hrvatskoj mora ići paralelno i konstituisanje srpskog jezika za Srbe u istoj republici, sa svima konsekvencama koje iz toga ističu u školstvu, upravi i kulturi").¹⁰³ At the same time, although Ivić conceded that the Novi Sad agreement was no longer binding since the other side had broken it, he still proclaimed a belief that its principles were good and useful for all who still respected them.¹⁰⁴ Miller overstates the case, therefore, when he claims that the book represents Ivić's "retreat from the Novi Sad Agreement to a narrower Serbianism."¹⁰⁵

Meanwhile, the Croatian Spring movement continued to gather momentum, and a new, younger liberal wave also took on positions of influence in Serbia. Croats continued to create the materials necessary for the implementation of a standard language, primary among which were the manuals needed for school instruction—a Croatian orthography and a Croatian grammar. The former, under the authorship of Stjepan Babić, Božidar Finka (1925–1999) and Milan Moguš (1927–), was ready to leave the warehouse in time for the start of the 1971–1972 school year, but the government approval for its release kept on being delayed. The Croatian Ministry of Education repeatedly requested clarification, to which the federal government in Belgrade replied that certain issues needed resolution. The "issues," of course, were the concerns expressed by Serb linguists in Belgrade about the possibility that Serbian children residing in

¹⁰³ *Srpski narod i njegov jezik*, 221.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 225.

¹⁰⁵ Miller, *Nonconformists*, 139. Miller also mistakenly gives 1972 as the date of the book's publication. This is not a trivial error; on the contrary, it is highly significant that Ivić's book was published before—and not after—the massive political crackdown of December 1, 1971.

Croatia would be forced to learn Croatian in school rather than Serbian.¹⁰⁶ In mid-autumn, orders came from the central authorities in Belgrade to ban the already-printed *Hrvatski pravopis* and to destroy all copies. A few pre-publication copies survived, one of which had been taken in the interim to London. It was published there, under great fanfare, and subsequently became known simply as *Londonac* ("the Londoner").¹⁰⁷ For a full two decades, it acted as a symbol of Croatian resistance, and one of the first acts of newly independent Croatia was to reprint the "Londonski pravopis" unchanged.

Soon after this, in November 1971, Brozović prepared a set of materials about the Croatian language for a teachers' conference in Šibenik. This document, called *Deset teza o hrvatskome jeziku: O ključnim pitanjima hrvatskoga književnog jezika* (Ten Theses on the Croatian Language: On Key Questions of the Croatian Literary Language) was circulated among members of the conference in mimeographed form. In January 1972, the Zagreb Linguistic Circle accepted the theses, but the document was published in full only in 1975, in a Croatian journal based in Munich.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless it quickly attained the status of an informal manifesto of Croatian linguistic independence, a position it still holds today, despite the fact that the prose is both repetitive and frequently unclear.

In late 1971 Tito made his move. On December 1, he summoned leading Serb and Croat politicians to his winter residence in Karadžorđevo and demanded their resignation. Some were even sent to prison; the most renowned of these was the future Croatian president Franjo Tuđman (1922–1999). The charge, of course, was that they had not "resisted the forces of nationalism, chauvinism and the class enemy" (... "jer se nisu oduprli 'jačanju nacionalizma, šovinizma i klasnog neprijatelja'").¹⁰⁹ These, in Tito's eyes, were the principal enemies of the "brotherhood and unity" that symbolized his vision of Yugoslavia. According to Marxist ideology, the nationalist attachments were supposed to have withered away once a proper socialist state was built. That such nationalist sentiments seemed only to grow instead angered and frustrated Tito, and he reacted

¹⁰⁶ Christopher Spalatin, "Language Situation in Croatia Today," *Journal of Croatian Studies* 14–15 (1973–1974), 6–7.

¹⁰⁷ *Hrvatski pravopis* (London: Nova Hrvatska), 1972.

¹⁰⁸ Dalibor Brozović, "Deset teza o hrvatskome jeziku," *Hrvatska revija* 25, no. 2, 209–215. Cited in Christopher Spalatin, "The Rise of the Croatian Standard Language," *Journal of Croatian Studies* 16 (1975), 3–17, which also includes the full text of the Ten Theses translated into English.

¹⁰⁹ Goldstein, *Hrvatska povijest*, 342.

with repressive measures. He continued to keep close tabs on “nationalists,” as is seen by a secret government document that came to light in 1993, after the fall of the communist government and the independence of Croatia. This document, produced at the end of 1980 and the beginning of 1981, was a summary of the dangerous nationalist activities of Croatian linguists. It included excerpts from police files identifying as nationalists the linguists most active at the time (all of whom, by the time the document was published, had become senior statesmen in Croatian linguistic affairs).¹¹⁰

At this time, nearly all the official attention on “nationalism” was focused on Croatia. But the strong emotions of nationalism were beginning to take hold among Serbs as well. Finally, it was becoming clear that language was not only one of the most obvious national symbols but also a very powerful tool of nationalism. In a prescient interview first published in 1973, the writer Danilo Kiš (1935–1989) spoke bitterly about nationalism, which he viewed as “first and foremost paranoia, individual and collective paranoia” (“Nacionalizam je, pre svega, paranoja. Kolektivna i pojedinačna paranoja”).¹¹¹ One of the several instances he cited was the intense patriotic attachment to the “gingerbread heart,” a particular kind of heart-shaped cookie decorated with national colors and sold at country fairs, and the fact that this attachment was accompanied by frequent arguments as to which national group had originated the idea of these gingerbread hearts (and therefore “owned” them). In 1978 he quoted this interview in a section of his sharply polemical book *The Anatomy Lesson* (*Čas anatomije*), and expanded considerably upon the idea of nationalism as paranoia;¹¹² this entire section on nationalism was published in English as a separate essay entitled “The Gingerbread Heart of Nationalism.”¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Republički komitet za prosvjetu, kulturu, fizičku tehničku kulturu, *Jezična problematika u funkciji nacionalističke ideologije u SR Hrvatskoj*. Reprinted in *Taj hrvatski*, ed. Nataša Bašić (Zagreb: Školske novine, 1992), 57–119. The biographical excerpts were excluded from this volume but were included in a summary notice of the volume *Taj hrvatski* in Hekman, *Deklaracija o nazivu*, 197–203.

¹¹¹ The interview appeared first in *Ideje* 4 (1973) and was then reprinted in Danilo Kiš, *Po-etika, knjiga druga* (Belgrade: Predsedništvo konferencije Saveza studenata, 1974), 174–181. The English quoted is from the translation by Michael Henry Heim (see note 113 below).

¹¹² It forms the second half of the section entitled “O jednoj skandaloznoj (književnoj) aferi, subjektivno,” in *Čas anatomije* (Belgrade: Nolit, 1978) (pp. 30–50 in the 1990 reprint [Sarajevo: Svjetlost]).

¹¹³ Danilo Kiš, “The Gingerbread Heart of Nationalism,” in *Homo Poeticus, Essays and Interviews*, edited and with an introduction by Susan Sontag (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1995), 15–34.

In this extended essay, Kiš includes pointed references to nationalistic views on language, taking advantage of the double meaning of *Matica* (it signifies both a queen bee able to sting, and a cultural institution that had assumed the role of language defender):

Apologies for a language of one's own . . . are still prevalent—"Writing one's language properly is a form of patriotism."—Luci Delarue-Mardias (*La Liberté*, 1933)—in the guise of, say, the philological passions of late romanticism or the philological jousts between Zagreb and Belgrade, each of which has its "sweet mother tongue" down on index cards, so alike in structure, so different in aroma, queen bees ready at any moment to stab each other with their poisoned stings, each convinced of the authenticity and purity of her particular healing nectar.¹¹⁴

(Te apologeme traju i do dana današnjeg ["Ecrire proprement sa langue est une des formes du patriotisme"], čas kao poznoromantički filološki zanosi, čas kao filološki utuci dvaju matičinih centara, od kojih svaki poseduje svoj sopstveni "slatki narodni govor," raspoređen u fišama, tvari tako slične po sastavu i tako različne po aromi, a pčeline su matice spremne u svakom času da se uzajamno probodu svojim otrovnim žaokama, uverene svaka za sebe u autentičnost i nepatvorenost svog sopstvenog lekovitog mleča!)"¹¹⁵

Once Again, What about Bosnia-Herzegovina?

Sandwiched as they were between Serbia and Croatia, the inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina were highly sensitive to what they termed "paternalistic tendencies."¹¹⁶ They rejected claims by outsiders that their language was nothing more than a mixture of eastern and western variants—Serbian written in the Latin alphabet and with ijekavian pronunciation.¹¹⁷ Already they had begun to use terms like "intervariety" (*međuvarijanta*) about their form of the language.¹¹⁸ When news of the Declaration and

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 31 (translation by Michael Henry Heim).

¹¹⁵ Kiš, *Čas anatomije*, 47 (in the 1990 reprint). In Kiš's original, the French quote is translated in a footnote; only Heim tracks the quote to its source, however.

¹¹⁶ Šipka, "Standardni jezik," 428.

¹¹⁷ This commonly held belief had been expressed by Ljudevit Jonke.

¹¹⁸ Srđan Janković, "Pogled na bosanskohercegovački međuvarijantni tip," *Pregled* 57 (1967), 419–451; Ismet Smailović, "Bosna i Hercegovina u međuvarijantskom položaju i problemi koji se s tim u vezi javljaju u nastavi," *Prilozi nastavi srpskohrvatskog jezika i književnosti* 2 (1969), 36–43. Even a Croatian scholar remarked on a "third" variant: Mate Hraste, "O trećoj varijanti hrvatskog književnog jezika," *Jezik* 13 (1965–1966), 106–113; all cited in George Thomas, "The Role of Lexical Variants in the Present-Day Language Situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Language Problems and Language Planning* 6, no. 1 (1982), 29–44.

the Proposal reached them, they immediately reacted with alarm. After a meeting on March 27, 1967, the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Bosnia-Herzegovina issued a sharply worded statement, condemning both documents as "a reflection of the nationalist and chauvinist views and predilections of the signatories" ("izraz nacionalističkih i šovinističkih gledanja i opredjeljenja njihovih potpisnika"), and also as an attack on the ideals of Yugoslavia. One of these ideals, they continued, was the "inalienable right of all citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina to make use of the riches of language in an atmosphere of freedom and maximum tolerance" ("neotuđivo pravo svih građana u Bosni i Hercegovini da se koriste bogatstvom jezika, slobodno i do kraja tolerantno"). The document concluded by asking educational and cultural institutions to become actively engaged in the search for solutions. According to Šipka, the concepts "freedom of usage" and "tolerance," used in this document for the first time in official pronouncements on language, were highly significant for the future development of language policy in Bosnia-Herzegovina.¹¹⁹ This was particularly so in that the same document also made explicit reference to the multiethnic nature of Bosnia and implicit reference to the sensitive issue of relations of equality between the separate groups.

Everyone in Bosnia was acutely aware of the population mix, and even more so of the fact that no one ethnic group dominated. The idea of nations, or ethnic groups (the word *narod* refers to both these concepts as well as to the idea of "people") was central to Tito's ideology. Each of the separate "brother" nations that formed the Yugoslav unit was recognized as a separate entity if it formed the majority within one of the republics of the federation; members of any of those nations who happened to reside in a different republic could then associate themselves with the identity of their "mother nation." Under this reckoning, therefore, Yugoslavia consisted of five "nations": Croats, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Serbs, and Slovenes. There was no "Bosnian" nation because there was no majority population in the republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Croats and the Serbs residing in Bosnia had a "national identification" due to the fact that such majorities existed elsewhere in Yugoslavia, within the republics of Croatia and Serbia. Bosnian Muslims, though, existed in limbo; indeed, except for their status as "the flower of the Croatian people" within the

¹¹⁹ Šipka, "Standardni jezik," 429. The full statement appeared in *Političke aktuelnosti* on April 1, 1967, and was reprinted in *O književnojezičkoj politici u socijalističkoj republici Bosni i Hercegovina* (Sarajevo: Novinsko izdavačko štamparsko preduzeće "Oslobođenje," 1975), 11–15.

NDH, they had been largely ignored ever since the abolition of the “Bosnian language” (and with it, the idea of *bošnjaštvo*) in 1907. With the liberalization of the 1960s, however, it became possible to recognize their historical contribution to Yugoslav culture, including language. A decade earlier the Bosnian Muslim scholar Abdulah Škaljić had produced a two-volume study of Turkish-derived words (*turcizmi*) found in Bosnian dialects and folklore texts.¹²⁰ This was a bulky work printed in lithograph format and not widely available. By 1966, however, Škaljić had expanded it into a proper dictionary of such words found in general usage throughout Serbo-Croatian, and it was published by a mainstream press.¹²¹ Yet even then he was criticized because “it was not politically appropriate to demonstrate how strongly Serbo-Croatian, and especially the language in Bosnia and Herzegovina, had been influenced by oriental languages.”¹²²

Further proof that Muslims had become acceptable at the official level is seen in the Central Committee’s response to the Declaration and Proposal, where Muslims are mentioned in the same breath as Serbs and Croats. Bosnia-Herzegovina, the document said, was a “community of Serbs, Croats and Muslims [bound in] brotherhood and [enjoying] equal rights, who had earned these rights by working together in common cause with other nations in Yugoslavia” (“Socijalistička Republika Bosna i Hercegovina, kao zajednica ravnopravnih i zbratimljenih Srba, Hrvata i Muslimana, nastala kao rezultat njihovih istorijskih težnji i narodnooslobodilačke borbe zajedno sa ostalim narodima Jugoslavije . . .”).¹²³ In a follow-up report issued on March 15, 1968, the Central Committee specifically referred to Serbs, Croats and Muslims as equal peoples (now using the technical term *narodi*), as it articulated again its stance on linguistic freedom and tolerance: “The nations of Bosnia-Herzegovina—Serbs, Croats and Muslims—freely and with equality use both variants of the Croato-Serbian/Serbo-Croatian language, mixing the [specific] markers of [each] variant” (“Narodi Bosne i Hercegovine—Srbi, Hrvati i Muslimani ravnopravno i jednom i drugom varijantom hrvatskosrpskog, odnosno srpskohrvatskog jezika, miješajući

¹²⁰ Abdulah Škaljić, *Turcizmi u narodnom govoru i narodnoj književnosti Bosne i Hercegovine* (Sarajevo: Bilten Instituta za proučavanje folkloru u Sarajevu, dopunska izdanja 2, 1957).

¹²¹ Škaljić, *Turcizmi u srpskohrvatskom jeziku* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1966); reprinted in 1973 under the title *Turcizmi u srpskohrvatskom/hrvatskosrpskom jeziku*.

¹²² Svein Mønnesland, “Is There a Bosnian Language?” in *Language in the Former Yugoslav Lands*, eds. Ranko Bugarski and Celia Hawkesworth (Bloomington: Slavica, 2004), 136. Mønnesland does not spell out the nature of the criticisms.

¹²³ *O književnojezičkoj politici*, 11.

njihova varijantna obilježja").¹²⁴ The following year, 1969, the denomination "Muslim" was accepted at the federal level as the name of a constituent "nation" in Yugoslavia, at the same level as the other five.¹²⁵

The education and cultural institutions that had been asked to search for solutions to the language dilemma responded by organizing a symposium. This three-day meeting, formally known as the *Simpozijum o jezičkoj toleranciji* (Symposium on Language Tolerance), was held in Sarajevo April 23–25, 1970. The resolutions reached by this meeting concerned (1) the name of the language (the official name always had to be double—*srpskohrvatski/hrvatskosrpski*—while teachers and pupils were free to choose between them); (2) its alphabets (both Cyrillic and Latin had equal rights, both were to be taught at the elementary level, and students at higher levels could choose which they wished to write in); (3) technical terminology (pupils should be taught what was in general use in the country at large, that is, both Serbian and Croatian forms); (4) pronunciation (ijekavian was to be used exclusively, except in quoting literary texts originally written in ekavian); and (5) freedom of choice in "means of expression," as concerned both vocabulary and orthography, with the proviso that orthographic choices be consistent.

The most interesting element of the symposium report, however, was its last sentence, in which the speech norm used in Bosnia was for the first time described as a unique code of its own, a "linguistic expression" (*jezički izraz*) that was a "very complex and specific linguistic phenomenon" ("veoma složen i osebujuć jezički fenomen").¹²⁶ Some ten months later, on February 17, 1971, the Central Committee issued a document entitled *Književni jezik i književnojezička politika u Bosni i Hercegovini* (Literary Language and the Politics of Literary Languages in Bosnia and Herzegovina), which not only approved these resolutions but also expanded considerably on them.¹²⁷ Starting from the observation that "language disputes and sharp polemics are . . . but a means of externalizing certain

¹²⁴ Ibid., 20; also quoted in Šipka, "Standardni jezik," 430. The full report appeared in the Sarajevo daily *Oslobođenje* on March 20, 1968.

¹²⁵ The term *musliman* (with a lower-case letter) continued to refer to an adherent of Islam in general, while the term *Musliman* (with a capital letter) now officially referred to this national-ethnic group within Bosnia.

¹²⁶ *O književnojezičkoj politici*, 28–29. The full report first appeared in *Mostarsko savjetovanje o književnom jeziku*, ed. Radivoje Papić (Sarajevo: Institut za jezik i književnost, 1974), 203–205; it is reprinted in its entirety in *O književnojezičkoj politici*, 25–29.

¹²⁷ First published in the Sarajevo daily *Oslobođenje* on March 24, 1971, it was reprinted in *Mostarsko savjetovanje*, 207–214, and in *O književnojezičkoj politici*, 33–48.

sociopolitical contradictions, an expression of the spiritual-cultural state in various regions of our linguistic region, i.e., in our four republics of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia and Serbia" ("jezičke rasprave i oštre polemike... su samo vid ispoljavanja izvjesnih društveno-političkih protivrječnosti, odraz stanja duhova u različitim sredinama na našem jezičkom području, tj. u naše četiri republike: Bosni i Hercegovini, Crnoj Gori, Hrvatskoj i Srbiji"),¹²⁸ the writers of the report observed that because the language of Bosnia-Herzegovina was clearly unique, it could not be defined in terms of one of the variants ("književnojezički izraz u Bosni i Hercegovini ne može se varijantski odrediti, jer je, i bez posebnih ispitivanja, evidentno da je on specifičan").¹²⁹ They specifically rejected all theories of "cross-breeding" of the two variants ("teorije... o "ukršćavanju" dviju varianata") and asserted that these theories "were an expression of linguistic (and not only linguistic) hegemonism that sought to 'dominate' Bosnia-Herzegovina under the pretense of linguistic equality and tolerance" ("izraz su težnji lingvističkih [i ne samo lingvističkih] hegemonista koji se, pod firmom jezičke ravnopravnosti i tolerancije, bore za 'prevlast' u Bosni i Hercegovini").¹³⁰

Although the writers of the document do not refer to a separate language as such, they are clearly intent on demonstrating that their language is something unique. At the outset of the document, they refer to this language by the phrase *književnojezički izraz*, a phrase composed of a noun which means "expression" (not "language") modified by an adjective that explicitly contains both elements of the term "literary language." Later in the same paragraph, they use the phrases *književni jezik u BiH* ("the literary language in B-H") and *književnojezička stvarnost u BiH* (a literal translation of which is "the literary-language reality in B-H").¹³¹ The pre-final sections of the document affirm the necessity for "nurturing the autochthonous Bosno-Herzegovinian literary-language expression that is the common treasure of all the peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina" ("njegovanje autohtonog bosanskohercegovačkog književnojezičkog izraza, koji je zajedničko blago svih naroda Bosne i Hercegovine"),¹³² and the conclusion states, for the first time, the full name by which this unique Bosnian standard subsequently came to be known: *standardni bosanskohercegovački*

¹²⁸ *O književnojezičkoj politici*, 33.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 46.

književnojezički izraz ("the standard Bosno-Herzegovinian literary-language expression").¹³³ Nevertheless, the official name still remained the dual *srpskohrvatski/hrvatskosrpski*, and an orthography under that name was published in 1972.¹³⁴

In the fall of 1973, over 300 language professionals (scholars and teachers) met for three days in Mostar to discuss progress made in implementing the resolutions of the 1970 Symposium on Language Tolerance. Participants at this meeting, known as the "Mostar Advisory Meeting on the Literary Language" (Mostarsko savjetovanje o književnom jeziku), were in agreement on their insistence that the official name of the language should remain bilateral, "*srpskohrvatski ili hrvatskosrpski*," and that an institute should be founded to organize research into the nature of specifics of the "standard-language expression" in Bosnia-Herzegovina.¹³⁵ They noted with chagrin that although the principle of "freedom of choice" had been clearly proclaimed, there still remained "misunderstanding and conflict about the limitations of that freedom on the one hand, and misuse of that freedom on the other" ("još uvijek ima nesporazuma i sukoba zbog ograničavanja te slobode—na jednoj, i zloupotrebe individualne slobode izbora—na drugoj strani").¹³⁶

Indeed, most outsiders reacted with scorn to the events in Bosnia. As one outside observer noted,

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, we have now a normative manual, this new *Orthography*, which is neither Serbian nor Croatian, which does not want to create a new standard, yet it claims to have one. This contradictory solution is based, they say, on tolerance and freedom. . . . We dare say that that kind of freedom may result more in anarchy or tyranny of the mightier than in tolerance.¹³⁷

Bosnians, however, took seriously the task of describing their specific form of expression. The institute founded after the Mostar conference oversaw the writing of a language guide¹³⁸ and undertook research projects, including surveys of usage. One specific discovery that resulted from these surveys was that the speech of Bosnians was relatively devoid of

¹³³ Ibid., 47.

¹³⁴ Svetozar Marković, Mustafa Ajanović and Zvonimir Diklić, *Pravopisni priručnik srpskohrvatskog-hrvatskosrpskog jezika* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1972).

¹³⁵ For the text of the conclusions, see *Mostarsko savjetovanje*, 197–199, and *O književnojezičkoj politici*, 59–63.

¹³⁶ *O književnojezičkoj politici*, 61–62.

¹³⁷ Spalatin, "Language Situation," 11.

¹³⁸ Milan Šipka, *Jezički savjetnik* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1975).

variant marking. That is, whereas elsewhere in Yugoslavia both Serbs and Croats were very aware of the “eastern” or the “western” markings carried by particular words, this was much less true of Bosnians, who frequently used both words interchangeably, often without even knowing which side any one word “belonged to.”¹³⁹ As noted by the author of an earlier such survey, there are words that in Belgrade and Zagreb “wear the uniform of variant opposition, but in Bosnia-Herzegovina they are used without that uniform, just like any other word.”¹⁴⁰ The fact that certain words did retain variant markings, at least for some speakers, meant that it was very necessary to maintain a “tolerant” policy.

The Writing on the Wall

In 1974 a new constitution was promulgated that shifted to the individual republics many powers previously concentrated at the federal level. Among these was the right of each republic to determine for itself which standard linguistic idiom it would use as its internal official administrative language and to name this “idiom” in its own republican constitution. There was a considerable irony in this development: it had been demands for linguistic independence—immediately denounced as a dangerous threat to the country’s union—that led to a liberalizing movement that was summarily crushed by massive political purges. Now, only three years after the purges, these very demands were quietly met via a paragraph embedded within a numbingly long and bureaucratic document. Croats immediately included in their republican constitution an article decreeing that the language of public use was the Croatian literary language (“U Socijalističkoj Republici Hrvatskoj u javnoj je upotrebi hrvatski književni jezik”). Mindful of the tricky situation concerning the Serb minority in Croatia, however, they took care to qualify it as the “standard form of the popular language of Croats and Serbs in Croatia, which bears the name Croatian or Serbian” (“standardni oblik narodnog jezika Hrvata i Srba u Hrvatskoj, koji se naziva hrvatski ili srpski”). Whether this had any effect in reality is unclear: according to Banac, “the reintroduction of the term ‘Croatian or Serbian language’ had no apparent consequences

¹³⁹ Janković, “Pogled”; Zvonimir Diklić, “Sloboda izraza ortografsko-gramatičkih i leksičkih dubleta,” *Prilozi nastavi srpskohrvatskog jezika i književnosti* 3 (1970), 74–89; both cited in Thomas, “The Role of Lexical Variants,” 37–38.

¹⁴⁰ Janković, “Pogled,” 443, quoted in Thomas, “The Role of Lexical Variants,” 37.

in linguistic practice and was not strictly enforced.”¹⁴¹ Bosnians, having just articulated these issues for themselves in the official meetings of 1970 and 1973, included in their republican constitution an article defining the language of official use as *srpskohrvatski/hrvatskosrpski*, but also allowed the use of the *bosanskohercegovački standardnojezički izraz*. The remaining two republics (given that there was no such issue in either Slovenia or Macedonia) both continued to call their official language by the name “Serbo-Croatian”. Serbia stated furthermore that both ijekavian and eka-vian forms continued to be in official use, while Montenegro specified its official idiom as the ijekavian variant of Serbo-Croatian.

The issue of a separate Montenegrin language was raised as early as 1969. Without mentioning any names, Pavle Ivić referred in 1971 simply to a “small group of nationalist flag-wavers” whose ideas about a separate Montenegrin language “lacked linguistic foundation” (“U Crnoj Gori je 1969. godine malena grupa barjaktara ubojite nacionalne strasti izašla, prvi put u istoriji, s idejom o zasebnom crnogorskom jeziku. Toj ideji nedostaje lingvistička podloga.”)¹⁴² The carrier of this banner, the Montenegrin literary scholar Vojislav Nikčević (1935–2007), had in fact published an article in the Zagreb periodical *Kritika* in 1970. Inspired by the emotional fervor surrounding the Declaration in Croatia, he had jumped into the fray by claiming that the language introduced by the great Vuk Karadžić had not been Serbian after all, but had instead been Montenegrin.¹⁴³ Although the arguments were indeed linguistically unsound, the group found support among Croat linguists, who were sympathetic to the principle that if an ethnic group felt strongly enough that its means of expression was a separate language, then that group should have the right to claim it as such. Nevertheless, no official proclamations were made during the remainder of Yugoslavia’s existence, unless one counts the “discovery” made in late 1977 by the Croatian politician Vladimir Bakarić (1912–1983) that Montenegrins do not speak Serbian, but rather Montenegrin (“Do sada smo mi svi znali da Crnogorci govore srpski; međutim, pokazuje se da govore crnogorski”).¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Banac, “Main Trends,” 250.

¹⁴² Ivić, *Srpski narod i njegov jezik*, 219.

¹⁴³ Vojislav Nikčević, “Čiji je takozvani Vukov jezik?” Cited in Miloš Okuka, “Montenegrin vs. Serbian, or: Is There a Separate Montenegrin Language at All?” in *Lexical Norm and National Language: Lexicography and Language Policy in South-Slavic Languages after 1989*, ed. Radovan Lučić (Munich: Otto Sagner, 2002), 38.

¹⁴⁴ Vladimir Bakarić, “Samoupravljanje—suština socijalističkog preobražaja savremenog društva,” *Marksistička misao* 1, 1978 (from a radio interview given in Zagreb on

Although the drive to recognize Montenegrin as a separate language would not begin in earnest until 1993, the constitutional changes of 1974 are very significant as concerns the other three republics. The names recorded in the republican constitutions of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, respectively, were much more than just names. Each group had by then come to a clear awareness that the means of expression associated with the population in question was uniquely its own, and different from the prevailing norm of the country's capital, Belgrade. The Croats had obviously moved much further along this path, and it is fair to say that a separate Croatian language already existed at this point. Although one clearly cannot say the same about Bosnian, neither can one say (as most Serbs and Croats still privately did) that the speech of Bosnia-Herzegovina was a simple mixture of eastern and western variants. Although it remained unclear exactly what the "Bosno-Herzegovinian standard-language expression" was, Bosnians were certain that it existed, and that conviction provided them with a psychological bulwark against the threat of "paternalism" on the part of Serbs and Croats. As for Serbs, they were secure in their belief that Vuk's language was their language, whether it was called Serbo-Croatian or Serbian. By 1974, therefore, the essential elements of the dissolution of Serbo-Croatian were already in place. Although the bonds between linguistic consciousness and ethnic awareness would continue to grow and develop over the next decade and a half, the groundwork for the breakup of Serbo-Croatian into separate components had been laid. The fact that all these peoples still understood each other without difficulty was of secondary importance (if it mattered at all). In this sense, the breakup of Yugoslavia was already "written in the linguistic cards"; the only question was "whether anyone was able, or willing, to read the message."¹⁴⁵

Serbs, conscious of activity in other republics connected with the definition of "forms of expression," discussed these matters for themselves during a three-day conference held April 26–28, 1982. The conference was occasioned, they stated, by "the need to increase social concern about language, to speak more clearly to the public about language issues, and to calm the current linguistic ferment" ("potreba da se poveća društvena briga

December 2, 1977). Cited in Branislav Brborić, "Predistorija i sociolingvistički aspekti 1: Retrospektiva srpsko-hrvatskoga jezičkog i političkog ujedinjavanja i razjedinjavanja," in *Srpski jezik na kraju veka*, ed. Milorad Radovanović (Belgrade: Institut za srpski jezik SANU, 1996), 23.

¹⁴⁵ Ranko Bugarski, "Language, Nationalism, and War in Yugoslavia," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 151 (2001), 73.

o jeziku, da se o pitanjima jezika glasnije progovori pred širom javnošću, [i] da se usmeri savremena jezička bujica").¹⁴⁶ The conference reports touched on many different aspects of language, but the overall conclusion was that the existing norm corresponded to current needs and should be maintained. One of the papers dealt with issues of norms and "tolerance" and observed that tolerance seemed to be more the norm in Serbia than in other republics. In Croatia, for instance, the results of the newly codified language "had not been affirmed by all members of the society" ("nisu redovno nailazili na punu društvenu afirmaciju"); in Bosnia-Herzegovina the move to exclude ekavian in school instruction did not seem in accord with a principle of tolerance; and as for Montenegro, the move to establish a separate language had met with energetic resistance.¹⁴⁷ Although the desire to maintain the existing norms (and name) of Serbo-Croatian was clearly the wish of all Serbian language professionals, the result of this choice was a tendency on the part of the rest of the country to equate "Serbo-Croatian" with "Serbian" even more than they had already done. The unfortunate consequence was that less and less notice was taken of that part of the population for whom the concept "Serbo-Croatian" was associated with the broader Yugoslav identity, rather than with the more narrow Serbian identity.

By the time of Tito's death in May 1980, the severe economic and political problems that would be major causes of the breakup were already evident. Language issues as such moved into the background for most of the ensuing decade, though Serbs and Croats continued to wrangle over the degree to which Vuk's language was the basis of everyone's language. In one such instance, Pavle Ivić and Radoslav Katičić engaged in a polite but nevertheless pointed debate in the pages of a French Slavistics journal, in which Ivić upheld the view that the Croats had adopted Vuk's language, while Katičić countered that the Croats had their own linguistic expression long before Vuk, and had freely chosen the version of it that just happened to correspond most closely to Vuk's.¹⁴⁸ In 1988, in one of

¹⁴⁶ Smiljka Vasić, "Uvodna reč," in *Aktuelna pitanja naše jezičke kulture* (Belgrade: Prosvetni pregled, 1983), 7–8.

¹⁴⁷ Egon Fekete, "Normiranje i jezička tolerancija," *Aktuelna pitanja*, 48.

¹⁴⁸ Pavle Ivić, "L'évolution de la langue littéraire sur le territoire linguistique serbo-croate," *Revue des études slaves* 56 (1984), 313–334; Radoslav Katičić, "L'évolution de la langue littéraire sur le territoire linguistique serbo-croate," *Revue des études slaves* 57 (1985), 667–673; Pavle Ivić, "A propos des objections de Radoslav Katičić," *Revue des études slaves* 59 (1987), 867–878; Radoslav Katičić, "A propos de la réplique de Pavle Ivić," *Revue des études slaves* 59 (1987), 879.

the last instances of Serb-Croat collaboration on language issues, Brozović and Ivić co-authored a lengthy encyclopedia article entitled "Jezik, srpskohrvatski, hrvatskosrpski, hrvatski ili srpski," which was also published as an individual monograph with a preface by Katičić.¹⁴⁹ The monograph showed that even scholars known to have sharply nationalistic views could still come to agreement on basic scholarly issues. Unfortunately, this was to be a swan song.

The End of Yugoslav Unity

By 1990 nationalistic fervor was at a high pitch in both Serbia and Croatia. The strong bond of language and identity, coupled with these intense feelings of ethnic pride, provided politicians who were bent on conflict with ready-made tools, and they did not hesitate to use these tools in whipping up the distrust, discord and hatred that led so easily to violence. In addition, not only were feelings about language manipulated to incite one group against another, but language itself was turned into a weapon, in the form of "hate speech."¹⁵⁰ The animosity between Serbs and Croats became recast in terms of the World War II struggle between Chetniks and Ustasha, and these two highly charged terms, with all their powerful negative associations, came to be applied indiscriminately to all Serbs and all Croats, respectively. Furthermore, as the 1991 war between Serbs and Croats threatened to spill over into Bosnia, Serbs and Croats living in Bosnia were caught between their allegiance to Bosnia as a place and their allegiance to Serbia or Croatia as a national concept. This created a sense of fear among the third group in Bosnia, the Muslims, which strengthened their sense of identity as separate from other Bosnians. In turn, the rise of this new Bosnian Muslim identity caused Serbs and Croats to refer to all Muslims by the pejorative term "Mujahedeen," a reference to militant fighters for Islam in lands further to the east. Unlike the terms "Chetnik" and "Ustasha," this term had no previous Yugoslav associations.

Bosnian Muslim intellectuals now put considerable effort into establishing their own cultural and ethnic identity. They did this by raising consciousness and pride in their Islamic past (the glorious days when Sarajevo was the acknowledged center of "Turkey in Europe") and by

¹⁴⁹ Dalibor Brozović and Pavle Ivić, *Jezik, srpskohrvatski, hrvatskosrpski, hrvatski ili srpski* (Zagreb: Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod "Miroslav Krleža," 1988).

¹⁵⁰ Bugarski, "Language, Nationalism and War."

taking what had formerly been the general “Bosno-Herzegovinian standard language expression” and transforming it to express their specific sense of Bosnian (Muslim) identity, both present and past. In 1992, at the start of the war in Bosnia, Alija Isaković (1932–1997) published a list of words said to be unique to the Bosnian language: nearly all of these were Turkish-derived words. Somewhat misleadingly, the word-list was presented as a “dictionary,” albeit a “dictionary of characteristic words.”¹⁵¹ The word-list was republished a year later by a Bosnian émigré organization in Switzerland, which also sponsored a reprint edition, in 1994, of the 1890 *Gramatika bosanskoga jezika*. Because this grammar was a straightforward representation of the language as coded by Vuk and Daničić, there was nothing at all “Muslim” about it—except perhaps the name. The publishers included a postscript, in Bosnian, German, French and English, identifying the grammar as one of the books “that unconditionally testify [to the] unique culture and tradition of Bosnia-Herzegovina,” which, they say, they publish now that their homeland “is emerging as a phoenix from the ashes bringing [the] Bosnian language to use again.”¹⁵² Isaković’s word-list was republished in 1995—but now the title on the cover was simply *Dictionary of the Bosnian Language* (the qualifier “characteristic lexicon” appears as a subtitle in parentheses, but only on the title page).¹⁵³

The Bosnian language could now claim a grammar (though one of historical interest only) and a dictionary (which was in fact only a word-list). Furthermore, there was no explicit attempt to clarify the extent to which these reference tools were intended to correspond to the “Bosno-Herzegovinian standard-language expression” spoken by all inhabitants of Bosnia. Isaković’s frequently quoted introduction to the *Dictionary* did nothing to resolve the issue, yet the wording resonates so well with the intense emotion of the 1990s that it could have been written about the language of any of the warring parties. “Our language is our moral,” he wrote, “and it does not take any particular effort to explain what the concept ‘Bosnian language’ means” (“Naš jezik je naš moral, i ne treba osobit trud da bismo objasnili pojam: bosanski jezik”). Whatever the Bosnian language was in substance, its formal and legal existence was now

¹⁵¹ Alija Isaković, *Rječnik karakteristične leksike u bosanskoj jeziku* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1992; reprint, Wuppertal: Bambi, 1993).

¹⁵² *Gramatika bosanskoga jezika* (1890; reprint, Wuppertal: Bosanska riječ—Das bosnische Wort, 1994).

¹⁵³ Alija Isaković, *Rječnik bosanskoga jezika (karakteristične leksike)* (Sarajevo: Bosanska knjiga, 1995).

indisputably established by the inclusion of its name in the Dayton Agreement that ended the war in Bosnia.¹⁵⁴

On September 7–8, 1998, a symposium was held in Bihać, in north-western Bosnia, to discuss the issues involved in codifying the language.¹⁵⁵ Participants were divided on a number of issues. Although some argued for a Bosnian language that would represent all inhabitants of Bosnia, the Bosnian Muslims predominated in their view that the Bosnian language should represent that portion of the Bosnian population which was neither Serb nor Croat. In other words, the “Bosnians” were outnumbered by the “Bosniaks.” Prior to 1993 the two terms, *Bosanac* and *Bošnjak*, had been used more or less interchangeably to refer to inhabitants of Bosnia, though the second was felt to be increasingly archaic. After 1993, however, the terms had two quite different meanings. Now, “Bosnian” made specific reference to geography whereas “Bosniak” denoted specifically ethnicity. Thus, a Bosnian (*Bosanac*) was now any inhabitant of the region called Bosnia, but a Bosniak (*Bošnjak*) was only a Bosnian Muslim.

That distinction was clear. What continues to be disputed is the name of the language. Since the codifiers of modern Bosnian were Muslims (that is, Bosniaks) intent on introducing as many Turkish-derived elements into the language as possible in order to emphasize its unique nature and its cultural history, it was felt (very strongly) by non-Muslim inhabitants of Bosnia that this language should now be called Bosniak (*bošnjački jezik*). The Bosniak codifiers themselves, however, not only pointed to the official name “Bosnian” in the Dayton accords, but also claimed the right to call their language what they wished. The official name of the language continues to be Bosnian (*bosanski jezik*), but the dispute is unresolved. It is for this reason that the small land of Bosnia-Herzegovina now has three official languages—Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian—a situation that leads to administrative and educational nightmares.

In Croatia, language professionals lost no time at all. They had been preparing and publishing language materials steadily throughout the last decade and a half. For instance, the authoritative works by Katičić (on Croatian syntax) and Babić (on Croatian word formation) were both published already in 1986; a third authoritative volume, on the history of

¹⁵⁴ The “General Framework Agreement” was initialed on November 21, 1995, in Dayton, Ohio.

¹⁵⁵ Ibrahim Čedić, ed., *Simpozij o bosanskom jeziku, zbornik radova* (Sarajevo: Institut za jezik, 1999). For a useful summary of the discussion, see Greenberg, *Language and Identity*, 150–155.

Croatian, came out in 1991.¹⁵⁶ The Croats marked their newly independent state by republishing two significant orthographic manuals from their past. One was the famous *Londonac*, the *Hrvatski pravopis* that had been suppressed by the Titoist government in late 1971 and then published in London in 1972; in 1990, it was reprinted unchanged in Zagreb. The other was the Ustasha “root-oriented orthography” of 1944, the *Hrvatski korijenski pravopis*: it appeared in a reprint edition in 1992.¹⁵⁷ Although the second of these publications was primarily of historical (and emotional) interest, the first was in constant use and continually reprinted. At this time, an active campaign began once again to “cleanse” the Croatian language. It was seen as one’s patriotic duty, and a sign of love for one’s country, to speak “pure” Croatian. For help in this endeavor, Croats could turn to the newspapers and journals, which were filled with language-advice columns. They could also consult one of the many self-help manuals, which (in the words of the author of one of these manuals) were written because “Croats are striving to speak good Croatian and in everyday life to demonstrate their national consciousness also by means of language” (“Hrvati nastoje govoriti lijepim hrvatskim jezikom i u svagdanjem životu i jezikom dokazati svoju narodnu svijest”).¹⁵⁸ The titles of these manuals usually referred to the act of “speaking correctly.” They were structured either in the form of a differential dictionary (essentially a list of words to be avoided together with the “good” words that should replace them)¹⁵⁹ or in the form of an advice manual (a compilation of brief informative pieces explaining why certain usages were to be preferred over others).¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ Radoslav Katičić, *Sintaksa hrvatskoga književnog jezika, nacrt za gramatiku* (Zagreb: Globus, 1986); Stjepan Babić, *Tvorba riječi u hrvatskome književnom jeziku, nacrt za gramatiku* (Zagreb: Globus, 1986); Stjepan Babić et al., *Povijesni pregled, glasovi i oblici hrvatskoga književnoga jezika* (Zagreb: Globus, 1991).

¹⁵⁷ The fact that the critical word in the title was spelled *korijenski* and not *korienski* indicated that its reissue was not intended to be a return to Ustasha policies.

¹⁵⁸ Stanka Pavuna, *Govorimo li ispravno hrvatski? Mali razlikovni rječnik* (Zagreb: Barka, 1993), i–ii. Cited in Keith Langston, “Linguistic Cleansing: Language Purism in Croatia after the Yugoslav Break-up,” *International Politics* 36 (1999), 197–201. The Croatian sentence is on p. 198, and Langston’s English translation is on p. 180.

¹⁵⁹ The prime example is Vladimir Brodnjak, *Razlikovni rječnik srpskog i hrvatskog jezika* (Zagreb: Školske novine, 1991). For a discussion of the problems inherent with differential dictionaries, see Dubravko Škiljan, “‘Differential’ Dictionaries, Their Motivations and Goals,” in Lučić, *Lexical Norm*, 126–133; and Mirko Peti, “Razlikovni rječnici,” in *Hrvatski jezik u XX. stoljeću*, eds. Marko Samardžija and Ivo Pranjković (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2006), 507–530.

¹⁶⁰ A typical example is Ilija Protuđer, *Pravilno govorim hrvatski, praktični jezični savjetnik* (Split: Matica hrvatska Split, 1997), a manual that continues to be reissued in updated forms.

In short, now that Croatia had finally achieved independence, it was felt that the Croatian language should follow suit and rid itself once and for all of elements felt to be foreign. There was considerable difference of opinion, however, as to the extent to which this undertaking should be pursued. The plethora of dictionaries and orthographic manuals that began to appear reflected this range of opinion. The most extreme manuals proposed replacements of anything that could even remotely be regarded as Serbian, no matter how awkward-sounding and unnatural the replacement word might be. This extreme view also favored an etymological spelling that was almost indistinguishable from that mandated during the years of the NDH. The writers of more moderate manuals felt that it was sufficient simply to describe current usage in Croatia and that it was unnecessary to force artificial changes upon the language simply to make a political point.¹⁶¹ During the first ten years of independence, however, when Tudjman was the leader of Croatia, it was politically necessary to speak and write what became known as *novohrvatski* ("new" Croatian), no matter how one felt privately about the matter. Language usage was closely scrutinized: one's political stance could be derived not only by one's vocabulary choices but also by one's spelling. Even now, there is a strong purist tendency in Croatia and continuing differences of opinion as to what constitutes "good" Croatian.

The Serbian wartime goal was to carve out those regions within Croatia and Bosnia that were largely populated by Serbs and to create new states from them. The area within Croatia was called Republika Srpska Krajina, and that within Bosnia was called simply Republika Srpska. The native speech of Serbs in each of these regions was similar to that of their non-Serb neighbors, and in each case it was ijekavian. Most were also much more comfortable with the Latin alphabet, since that was the norm in the regions where they lived. Once the war began, however, there were intense campaigns to revive a purer Serbian consciousness among these populations. The goal was not only to maximize the differences between them and the surrounding non-Serb populations, but also to increase the connection of these Serbs living in outlying regions to the central core of Serbia. As concerned language issues, this meant primarily encouraging the use of the Cyrillic alphabet.

¹⁶¹ For a discussion of the different goals of postwar Croatian dictionaries, see Damir Kalogjera, "Misunderstandings about the Role of the Monolingual Dictionary," in Lučić, *Lexical Norm*, 111–119.

Republika Srpska Krajina was short-lived, but Republika Srpska was a major player in the Bosnian war. It was there, in 1993, that the campaign to heighten Serb consciousness through the manipulation of language took an unexpected turn, when the leaders of Republika Srpska proclaimed that all public use of the language thereafter had to be ekavian. They made this decision not only out of a desire to consolidate unity among Serbs on both sides of the Serb-Bosnian border but also in protest against the “ijekavian-only” educational mandate that had prevailed in Bosnia-Herzegovina since the 1970 Symposium on Language Tolerance. But this protest was misdirected: the Bosnian “ijekavian-only” principle in 1970 had not excluded ekavian but rather ikavian, a form of speech that had not been part of the literary standard for over a century. That is, the native speech in Bosnia was, depending on the area, ijekavian or ikavian (see Maps 4 and 5); there were extremely few ekavian speakers, almost all of whom had relocated from elsewhere and had made the personal decision to maintain their ekavian speech. Furthermore, as Map 4 shows, the area of Republika Srpska was almost entirely ijekavian-speaking; this fact of language was certainly relevant to the identity of these Serbs. It was for these reasons that most linguists strongly opposed this decree, denouncing it as a nationalistic move that was a “direct attack on linguistic reality, on the language sense and usage of the speakers” (“direktan atak na jezičku stvarnost, na jezičko osećanje i praksu govornika”).¹⁶² Some, however, such as Pavle Ivić, supported the move. Observing that “it is obviously desirable, not only for financial reasons, for all Serb schools at all levels to use the same textbooks,” but that “in the ijekavian territories it is only with great difficulties that ekavian textbooks printed in Serbia can be used,” Ivić approved the officials’ desire to “remove the duality on this issue” and “introduce ekavian as the official language in that territory.” His view was that since “most of the Serbs in the Serb Republic were prepared, for the sake of goals of greater significance, to renounce that type of standard language that corresponds to their mother dialect,” the only reason the decree was rescinded in 1998 was “disagreement between the political parties.”¹⁶³

Within Serbia itself, language planning had reached a critical moment. Now that Croats and Bosnian Muslims were clearly out of the picture,

¹⁶² Ranko Bugarski, “Etnicitet i nacionalizam u jeziku,” in *Nova lica jezika* (Belgrade: XX vek, 2002), 75.

¹⁶³ Pavle Ivić, “Language Planning in Serbia Today,” *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 151 (2001), 12.

so was “Serbo-Croatian,” and the Serbs renamed their language “Serbian.” But this presented them with a new set of issues: should Serbian now be ekavian only, or should both ijekavian and ekavian be maintained? Should it be Cyrillic only, or should both alphabets be retained? Should the orthography remain as in the Vukovian model, or should adjustments be made? Having insisted so long on the status quo in the attempt to keep the country together, many Serbs now seemed to welcome the opportunity to make their language more “their own,” as Croats and Bosniaks had been doing. Multiple proposals were made, and there was much disagreement and political maneuvering.¹⁶⁴

In 1997, representatives from Serbia, Republika Srpska and Montenegro joined to form a Committee for the Standardization of Serbian in the hope of finding workable solutions. The following year, however, a group of strongly nationalist Serbs issued a proclamation entitled *Slovo o srpskom jeziku* (Declaration on the Serbian Language), which claimed that the Croatian and Bosnian languages were really Serbian. This document, produced on glossy paper and printed in 300,000 copies, carried the same inflammatory message in Serbian (Cyrillic only), English, Russian, French, Polish and German.¹⁶⁵ Essentially, it branded as a Croatian nationalist anyone who might condone what they called *čerečenje srpskog jezika*, or the “quartering” of the Serbian language (into Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian and Montenegrin).¹⁶⁶ More attention was paid to the document outside Serbia than within, where it was generally recognized as extremist.

The Montenegrin language movement continued to be associated with a single individual, Vojislav Nikčević. This one individual was extraordinarily active, however. Starting in 1993, he began producing descriptive linguistic materials, each accompanied by extensive argumentation in defense of the language, and worked tirelessly at this effort for the remainder of his life. His first major work was a general manual entitled *Piši kao što zboriš*, whose title was modeled on Vuk’s dictum *Piši kao što govoriš*—“Write as you speak”—using a Montenegrin dialectal word for

¹⁶⁴ For a good description of this complex situation, see Greenberg, *Language and Identity*, 58–87.

¹⁶⁵ *Slovo o srpskom jeziku* (Belgrade: Foundation for Truth, na Spasovdan, 1998) (7506). The Polish portion was included because the booklet was distributed at the Twelfth International Congress of Slavists, held that year in Warsaw. Members of the Committee for the Standardization of Serbian issued a statement at the Congress denouncing the stance expressed in the booklet.

¹⁶⁶ The verb *čerečiti*, “to quarter,” refers specifically to the barbaric medieval method of execution and was intended to evoke that level of threat.

“speak.”¹⁶⁷ Within the next four years, he had produced an orthographic manual¹⁶⁸ and a two-volume history of the language.¹⁶⁹ Finally, in 2001, he published a grammar of Montenegrin.¹⁷⁰ When Montenegro voted to become an independent state, it was natural that it should proclaim the official language to be Montenegrin. Nevertheless, many inhabitants of Montenegro consider their language to be Serbian, even as they are clear that their ethnic identity is Montenegrin.¹⁷¹ This, plus the fact that very few linguists accept the arguments Nikčević uses to justify the existence of Montenegrin as a separate language, renders the status of Montenegrin as a real and functioning literary standard less firm, despite the fact that Montenegrin has been proclaimed (and recognized, at the political level) as the official language of Montenegro. At the same time, there is no doubt that Nikčević’s work has touched an emotional chord among Montenegrins and given them a symbol with which to articulate an identity that, while not fully separated from Serbian, is nevertheless discrete and distinct.

Language and Identity at the End of the Century

Let us now take a final look at the bond between language and identity. Now we must factor in not only the experience of four decades of communist rule, but also the effects of a very traumatic period comprising the rise of virulent nationalism and a series of brutal and violent wars that dismembered Yugoslavia, destroyed hundreds of thousands of lives, and left the successor states not only with grave social and economic problems but also serious psychological wounds. Among other things, this means that it is no longer possible to articulate a single identity for any one of the component peoples—partly because the extreme views of identity that nationalist politicians promoted (successfully) in order to wage war do not coincide with the more moderate views of identity felt by those who

¹⁶⁷ Vojislav Nikčević, *Piši kao što zboriš, glavna pravila crnogorskoga standardnoga jezika* (Podgorica: Crnogorsko društvo nezavisnih književnika, 1993).

¹⁶⁸ Vojislav Nikčević, *Pravopis crnogorskoga jezika* (Cetinje: Crnogorski PEN centar, 1997).

¹⁶⁹ Vojislav Nikčević, *Crnogorski jezik: Geneza, tipologija, razvoj, strukturne odlike, funkcije*. 2 vols. (Cetinje: Matica crnogorska, 1993–1997).

¹⁷⁰ Vojislav Nikčević, *Gramatika crnogorskog jezika* (Podgorica: Dukljanska akademija nauka i umjetnosti, 2001).

¹⁷¹ According to the census of 2003, fully 60 percent stated that Serbian was their native language; results from the census of 2011 were not yet available at this writing.

rejected the extreme version but still felt part of the group in question, and partly because certain of the identities themselves shifted during this period, moving in more than one direction.

Croatian identity now focused more than ever on ties with the West and historical connections with Western culture. Pride in the beauty of the language and its rich and complex variety, all deriving from its pure Slavic roots, was all the more strong now that the thousand-year dream of a pure Croatian state, unfettered by any foreign intervention, had come true. Now it was even more vital to honor this thousand-year heritage by ridding the language of every possible tinge of impurity, and also to set the historical record straight by removing all suggestions that the Croatian language had not been unique and self-contained from the very outset (and in particular that it had ever formed part of a "unified" language). The more moderate view of Croatian identity affirmed historical ties with the West and expressed pride in the rich variety of the language and its cultural history, and welcomed the long-awaited independence. At the same time, it recognized the Yugoslav period, and the fact of Serbo-Croatian, as part of its history and saw no need to impoverish the Croatian language and Croatian cultural heritage by the ruthless and extreme purging of anything remotely considered "impure."

Serbian identity now focused more than ever on the Orthodox past, and on the Kosovo legend, according to which the Serbs were a "heavenly nation," God's chosen people, and the Cyrillic alphabet the manifestation of that perfection. The essence of Serbdom over its broad expanse had been sullied by the encroachment of outside (primarily Latinate) elements, and it was the Serbs' holy right to reclaim possession of that which others had appropriated for themselves. That the world had turned against them, demonizing the Serbs as a people and thwarting their goal of creating a state where Serbs could realize their common destiny, was yet further proof of their heavenly status as martyrs. The more moderate view of Serbian identity affirmed the historical connection with Orthodoxy, the heroic role of Serbs in keeping that heritage alive during the long Ottoman occupation, the broad base of Serbian culture and the importance of the Cyrillic alphabet as a symbol. At the same time, it saw the need to look more to the future than to the past, to maintain links with the West (and thus the Latin alphabet) and to find pride more in positive achievements than in past (and present) martyrdom.

Bosnian identity, in its Bosniak form, was based on the historical amalgamation of Slavic and Islamic elements into a unique blend of culture, which was enriched by the best of Arabic, Persian and Ottoman Turkish

cultural contributions but which remained quintessentially Balkan. As one of very few Muslim communities situated in Europe, and with a heritage not firmly grounded either in the East or the West, Bosnia was ideally suited to serve as a bridge between the two, and a Bosnian language that embraced this breadth of Eastern and Western elements would best serve this purpose. Should the historical antagonism of the West towards Islam continue, however, Bosniaks must assert not only their right to self-determination but also their dominant role within Bosnia. The more moderate view of Bosniak identity affirmed pride in the Islamic past and the need for incorporation of Islamic elements into the present but gave more importance to the need to re-establish the multiculturalism for which Bosnia was traditionally known, and did not see the necessity of introducing more Turkish-based elements into the language than were already in common usage.

Bosnian identity, in its non-Bosniak form, was now more than ever based on the sense of a place that was home to many different cultures, and the overriding need was to maintain the balance of tolerance between these cultures without giving precedence to any one of them. In particular, a language called Bosnian must be representative of all inhabitants of Bosnia, not just those who wished to stress the Islamic component.

Montenegrin identity was based on a strong pride in a rugged landscape and a fiercely heroic people who had been the only ones to hold the Turks at bay and to preserve Orthodox culture untainted. The identity was complex in that most of the history and cultural symbols on which it was based were shared with Serbs, yet there was a clear sense that the two were not identical. Some welcomed the option to express this uniqueness through a separate Montenegrin language, while others felt that the Serbian language embodied their own history and culture better than a version of Serbian with an overlay of local dialectal features that now bore a different name.

Yugoslav identity was now the most complex of all. In the eyes of some, it connoted either communist dictatorship or Serbian chauvinistic hegemony (or both), and they welcomed its demise with relief. In the eyes of others, it continued to represent a shared identity that still existed despite the definitive dismemberment of the country it had signified. Many felt that the gains of the breakup were minimal compared to what had been lost, and this contributed to a sense of yearning for that shared identity, a phenomenon that has been called "Yugo-nostalgia." The fact that speakers of all the "new" languages continue to understand one another is proof for many that a common language still exists, whether it is called

Serbo-Croatian, BCS, Central South Slavic, a neoštokavian diasystem, or simply “our language.” Indeed, there are still many who consider it their native language. Although this Yugoslav identity now exists only in the abstract sense, it is, without a doubt, still alive among many inhabitants of the former Yugoslavia, wherever they now reside.

Conclusion

The fate of Serbo-Croatian, put in the briefest of terms, is to have served as a means of unification among Serbs, Croats, Bosnians, and Montenegrins, only to then have failed to unify due to the interaction of identity politics and a myriad of other forces. Those who identify Serbo-Croatian clearly with Serbian centrism might say that Serbo-Croatian itself served as a means of disintegration.

The underlying linguistic commonality was clear to everyone, as it still is. But it proved impossible to find a way to create a standard form that expressed this commonality in a manner acceptable to all. It was not enough to have agreed on “Vukovian principles”: already within a decade of Vuk’s death, it was clear that each of the three major groups who would develop a standard form of expression on this model felt the need to adjust the model to fit their own specific situation. Subsequent attempts to create a unified form, each one centered in Belgrade, did not (and in the end could not) prove acceptable to all sides. Each side felt, with some justification, that its own model provided the best “Yugoslav” expression, and none had the combination of political strength and well-meaning broad-mindedness to adapt its model sufficiently to make it a true fit for all. Serbs felt that the purely štokavian language of Vuk provided the best model since it was spoken by the broadest range of the population, and that the ekavian form of this model should be adopted because it was the simplest. Croats felt that a model that incorporated more variety into Vuk’s štokavian base, especially from the čakavian and kajkavian regions, would be the most inclusive and provide the richest means of expression. Bosnians felt that a štokavian model that allowed synonymy of expression, incorporating traits of both eastern and western styles without the need to attach identity markers to one or the other of a pair of words, would provide the best bridge among distinct peoples who nevertheless shared a common communicative code.

What made it impossible to find a satisfactory solution, of course, was the strong bond of language and identity. The idea of a supranational

identity was central to the formation of each of the two Yugoslav states: each government acknowledged the existence of the individual national identities but believed that in the end the supranational identity would triumph. Attempts to bring such a supranational identity about by force, however, only made each of the national groups cling more tenaciously to its own particular identity. With respect to language, the logical endpoint of this has now been reached in the formal existence of Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian (and, conditionally, Montenegrin).¹⁷² This has created an obvious paradox. If one rejects the supranational identity, one of whose cornerstones was the conviction that everyone shared the same language, then one is also rejecting the possibility of mutual understanding. Yet everyone admits that mutual understanding still exists, because everyone knows that all the new separate languages share the same basic core. The resolution to the paradox (if a resolution in fact exists) is the realization that the importance of language as symbol eventually came to outweigh that of language as communicative tool.

This is not equally true for everyone. The burden of the preceding exposition has been primarily to demonstrate the power of the bond between language and identity, but also to show that this bond is not and has never been monolithic. Furthermore, the narrative has focused on the historical background of the current situation and has therefore paid only scant attention to the final decade of the last century. Now, more than two decades after the breakup, there are signs that these nationally oriented bonds, while still strong, may become less stifling. While the chances that Serbo-Croatian as such will come into being once more are close to nonexistent, there is hope that the mutual understanding that underlay its conception may once again come to play a more important role in the region.

¹⁷² Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian are always listed alphabetically, hence the acronym BCS. This clearly does not reflect the historical situation, in which both Serbian and Croatian have much longer and more well-established histories than does Bosnian.

IN DEFENSE OF THE NATIVE TONGUE:
THE STANDARDIZATION OF THE MACEDONIAN LANGUAGE AND
THE BULGARIAN-MACEDONIAN LINGUISTIC CONTROVERSIES¹

Tchavdar Marinov

Introduction to the Debates

“Are Bulgarian and Macedonian different languages?” “Is there a Macedonian language, or is it just a dialect?” “Is it closer to Serbian or to Bulgarian?” “Do you understand one another when everybody speaks his or her native tongue?” When discussing the Macedonian imbroglio with people from other countries, citizens of Bulgaria and of the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia are often asked such questions. They may seem naive, and some of them are surely improperly formulated. But they are representative of a certain pattern of thinking. In fact, these questions presuppose a certain commonsensical idea of identity, which takes for

¹ In this text, as in other chapters of the volume, I use different systems of transliteration of Cyrillic scripts. In the case of Macedonian and Serbian, I follow the canonical Latin transliteration of these languages (in Serbian it is very strict), which is based on the usage of special characters with diacritics (such as *č, š, ž*). However, these principles are not typical of the Latinization of Bulgarian and Russian scripts. In their cases I use English-derived digraphs (*ch, sh, zh*), as well as *y*, which corresponds to the *j* in Serbian and Macedonian. This system seems to be the most popular one and, at least in Bulgaria, it is currently accepted as official. Nevertheless, as the same system does not make a distinction between the vowel *a* and the schwa, for the sake of clarity, I use the character *ă* for the latter (that is, for what is *ъ* in the Bulgarian Cyrillic).

This solution is not perfect, particularly since this text and some of the others discuss historical matters related to *both* Macedonian and Bulgarian history. The problem is that many historical personalities are claimed as national heroes by both Bulgarians and Macedonians—hence all the political problems related to the transliteration of one or another name. Should we, for instance, transliterate the name of Гоце Делчев, the famous revolutionary from late Ottoman Macedonia, as *Gotse Delchev* in the Bulgarian way, or as *Goce Delčev* in the modern Macedonian way? In most cases I have tried to follow the national self-identification of the person in question, but for hotly debated and delicate cases such as *Delčev* or *Delchev* this is difficult. That is why in many instances I give both possible transliterations, separated with a slash. But the frequent repetition of the same names often obliges me to choose one of the models. And sometimes, it is simply not clear what transliteration should be adopted (for instance, in quotations of texts from the early or mid-nineteenth century). As a result, often I simply make a more or less random choice. Finally, these problems are also part of the Bulgarian-Macedonian “dis/entanglement.”

granted the direct link between linguistic classification, ethnic belonging and nationhood.

At least for most Macedonian and Bulgarian scholars, this link is absolutely legitimate. Moreover, they also ask and, even now, debate these questions. Both of the scholarly communities believe that answering them entails the affirmation, or alternately, the questioning—even the denial—of their own national identity. Thus, while Bulgarian specialists deny there are basic differences between their native tongue and Macedonian, for their Macedonian colleagues these are two clearly different languages, each with its own fundamental peculiarities and historical development. The staunch negation of a distinct Macedonian language is the reason why it is not taught in any university or other educational institution in Bulgaria. The same holds true for the Bulgarian language in former Yugoslav Macedonia: the local philologists respond with a boycott of the official idiom of Bulgaria.

The issue is also directly implicated in state politics. In 1992 Bulgaria was the first country to recognize Macedonia's independence from Yugoslavia, proclaimed a few months earlier. However, soon afterward, President of the Republic Zhelyu Zhelev announced that Sofia recognized only the *political* formation named "Republic of Macedonia" and would never affirm the existence of a Macedonian *nation* or *language*. Consequently, the Bulgarian anticommunist president and government started repeating "scholarly" clichés firmly established during the nationalist-communist regime of Todor Zhivkov. According to the view that is canonical in Sofia, the Macedonian nation was "artificially created" on the basis of the Bulgarian ethnic majority in the former Yugoslav Macedonia. According to the same credo, just like the nation, the Macedonian language is "artificial" and created by political fiat: it is in fact a Bulgarian "dialect," modified through a politically motivated "Serbification." For the representatives of Sofia, Bulgaria and Macedonia nevertheless have a "common history," and the inhabitants of the latter must recognize "historical realities"—in particular, the "historical fact" that the Slavs of Macedonia have always been Bulgarians and that today's "ethnic Macedonians" are their descendants.

Given this interpretation, in April 1994, during an official visit to Skopje, the Bulgarian minister of education refused to sign a bilateral agreement composed "in the Bulgarian language and the Macedonian language." Sofia's representatives rejected such a formula and suggested instead the vague expression "official languages of the two countries." The refusal of Skopje's officials to accept this was just the beginning of a long series of scandals throughout the 1990s that became famous as the "language

controversy” or “language issue” (*ezikov spor, jazično prašanje*). Thus while Athens rejected (and still rejects) the usage of the term “Republic of Macedonia” for the southernmost former Yugoslav republic, Sofia denounced the existence of a Macedonian Slavic national identity and language distinct from Bulgarian. As a result of the heated arguments between Bulgarian and Macedonian politicians, scholars and media, by the late 1990s more than twenty bilateral contracts were left unsigned.

In fact, Sofia was trapped by its own intransigence: the rejection of the Macedonian language blocked the Bulgarian nationalist project to influence, through cultural and economic cooperation, Macedonians’ self-identification. It also gave Skopje’s leaders, particularly the former communists traditionally affiliated with Belgrade, a reason to keep relations with their eastern neighbor frozen and to warn of “the Bulgarian danger.” Since attempting the “re-Bulgarianization” of Macedonia required, unpleasantly, recognizing a part of its identity, some political milieus in Sofia began insisting on signing documents according to Skopje’s formula. By their logic, it was still possible to pretend that the Macedonian language was a “Bulgarian dialect”: the mention of “Macedonian language” would represent a mere reference to a constitutional concept of a neighboring country, without any repercussions for linguistic “realities.”

In 1998 the conditions favored such a solution to the “language controversy.” In Macedonia a government led by the party VMRO-DPMNE replaced the old Yugoslav elite and established close contacts with its Bulgarian anticommunist counterpart. In February 1999 the prime ministers of the two countries—Bulgaria’s Ivan Kostov and Macedonia’s Ljubčo Georgievski—signed a number of agreements of bilateral cooperation as well as an official declaration. Sofia formally recognized Macedonian but as a language “according to the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia.” This wording left open the option of claiming that Macedonian was just a legal term and not an “objective reality.” And today, more than ten years after the “resolution” of the “language controversy” on a state level, it is far from resolved in the scholarly or the public sphere, where representatives of the two countries continue to debate the question of how distinct Macedonian is from Bulgarian.

This chapter tries to explain why this question is so hotly debated and so politicized. It deals with the process of codification of the contemporary Macedonian linguistic norm and with the conflicts between Bulgarians and Macedonians about the definition both of the Slavic vernacular dialects in geographic Macedonia and of the Macedonian norm itself. It attempts to shed light on the entanglement of the policies of language

and of national ideologies on the Balkans, more specifically in the South Slavic context. The chapter argues that the codification of the contemporary Macedonian idiom cannot be understood without examining a larger international context—in particular, the way the modern Bulgarian language itself was constructed as well as the influence of the Serbian standard. At the same time, it tries to show how the codification of a separate Macedonian norm has shaped Bulgarian nationalist representations—especially in the field of linguistics—during and after the communist period. Thus the following analysis is an attempt to go beyond the traditional discussion of comparisons and cultural transfers when studying language planning and nationalism. It emphasizes, instead, the mutual modeling and transformation of two national constructions.

As the Macedonian standard was definitively codified after World War II in the framework of federative “people’s” Yugoslavia, and given the fact that the Bulgarian negation of this “new” language began, quite logically, only after its creation, the chapter focuses on the polemics from the communist period between Yugoslav Macedonia and Bulgaria. However, it also analyzes the historical precedents that, since the late Ottoman period, have prepared the emergence of a Macedonian literary norm or, at least, have provided its first articulations, which were later accepted or discarded. As the chapter deals with Bulgarian-Macedonian polemics, it concerns only the definitions of the Slavic vernacular in Macedonia and of the contemporary Macedonian standard idiom. It must be noted, nevertheless, that over the last two centuries in geographic Macedonia, a number of other language varieties have been spoken, such as Modern Greek, Albanian (mostly Geg), Turkish, Aromanian (Macedono-Romanian) and Megleno-Romanian, Romani and Judaeo-Spanish (Judezmo, Ladino). Today, standard Bulgarian, albeit with dialectal rudiments, is undoubtedly the dominant language in the Pirin part of Macedonia (the Blagoevgrad region in Bulgaria), while the use of Serbian is still common in some circles and contexts in the former Yugoslav republic.

Language—Dialect: Some Conceptual Remarks

Without taking too many risks, one can start this discussion with two very general definitions. According to a number of classifications, the Macedonian and (or?) the Bulgarian language represent “Balkan Slavic,” which, together with the forms of “Balkan Latin” (Romanian, Aromanian, Megleno- and Istro-Romanian), Albanian and Modern Greek, is a part of

the so-called “language union” or *Sprachbund* of the Balkans. Introduced by linguists such as Nikolai Trubetzkoy and Kristian Sandfeld Jensen, this concept presupposes that all these languages, though of different origins, share certain structural characteristics—a convergence resulting from many centuries of multilingual cohabitation.² Among these common features, the specialists often indicate the simplification (in Modern Greek, Romanian) or the disappearance (in Bulgarian and Macedonian) of the declensions of nouns or the development of post-positive definite articles (in Albanian, Romanian, Macedonian and Bulgarian). Because of these and other features, Bulgarian and Macedonian are also classified in a special subgroup in the framework of the South Slavic language group. As such, they are sometimes termed “Southeast Slavic languages,” as opposed to the “Southwest Slavic” ones: Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian/Montenegrin and Slovene.³ The latter have kept, for instance, the old Slavonic declensions of nouns; they do not have definite articles; and they share other basic characteristics that distinguish them from Macedonian and Bulgarian.

If all that is perhaps universally acceptable, the status of Macedonian vis-à-vis Bulgarian remains disputed. The existence of a Macedonian language is denied by the linguists in Sofia (and, on rare occasions, by authors from other countries) who tend to reduce it to a simple western Bulgarian dialect (*dialekt, narechie*) or stigmatize it as an “artificial” (*izkustven*) language based on such a dialect. Other linguists—(former) Yugoslav but also American, Western- and Eastern European and Russian—uphold the rival point of view and assert the distinctive identity of Macedonian.

Even a brief glance at the existing literature shows all possible interpretations of the relationship between Bulgarian and Macedonian—from the Macedonian doctrine to the Bulgarian counter-doctrine, with several variations in between. The French linguist Claude Hagège believes that “Macedonian is certainly closer to Bulgarian than to Serbo-Croatian, but it is distinct from both of them.”⁴ However, in 2005, Macedonian academic

² Victor Friedman, “The Sociolinguistics of Literary Macedonian,” *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 52 (1985): 51. Some specialists have tried to explain certain Balkan linguistic phenomena through a Turkish influence, but the versions of Turkish (as well as of Romani) spoken on the Balkans are themselves “balkanized”: Friedman, “The Sociolinguistics,” 55.

³ Victor Friedman, “The Modern Macedonian Standard Language and Its Relation to Modern Macedonian Identity,” in *The Macedonian Question: Culture, Historiography, Politics*, ed. Victor Roudometof (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2000), 177.

⁴ Claude Hagège, *Le Souffle de la langue. Voies et destins des parlers d'Europe* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1992), 188.

milieus were shocked by the second edition of a (once again) French encyclopedia. It stated that “Bulgarian, the official language of Bulgaria, is spoken by 9 million people. It includes a dialectal version, Macedonian, the language of the Republic of Macedonia, which is spoken by almost 2 million people.”⁵ Some other professional linguists claim that “...the Macedonian dialects, very diverse as they are, belong nevertheless to the Bulgarian-Macedonian dialectal setting, a heritage from a common religious past attested to by linguistic traits that make them clearly different from the Serbo-Croatian idioms.” And the same authors state about the Macedonian standard norm: “Simultaneously with ‘Macedonian nationality,’ the master from Belgrade decided to promote a standard language based on what, in the local dialects, was the most distant from Bulgarian and on a phonological graphic—just like the Serbian elaborated by Vuk Karadžić, and not on the more ‘historical’ orthography of Bulgarian...”⁶

The interpretations of the national belonging of Macedonian, which at first glance look diverse, are in fact founded on an essentialist view of national identity. On the basis of their language, the Macedonians are regarded as an “artificial” construction, a political alteration of the Bulgarian “historical nation.”⁷ Or, conversely, the linguists try to reassert the “genuineness” of the Macedonian national identity by referring to “objective” differences between the Slavic language spoken in Macedonia on the one hand and in Bulgaria and in Serbia on the other. However, from the 1960s on, a number of (socio-)linguistic and historical works of research have analyzed the particular *politics* that have played a crucial role in the *construction* of modern national languages. Since Einar Haugen’s pioneer writings in the field of sociolinguistics, the creation and the social diffusion of standard languages are no longer seen as a “natural” process of “regulation” and “modernization” of an age-old linguistic entity but as a creative *language planning* or *language policy*.⁸

Undoubtedly, the political instrumentalization of language is an intrinsic aspect of nationalism, be it “ethnic” or “civic.” The linguistic homogenization of a given country through the educational system, army and

⁵ Michel Malherbe, *Les Langages de l'humanité. Une encyclopédie des 3.000 langues parlées dans le monde* (Paris: Robert Lafont, 1995), 679 (first edition).

⁶ Daniel Baggioni, *Langues et nations en Europe* (Paris: Payot et Rivages, 1997), 313. He refers to Paul Garde, *Vie et mort de la Yougoslavie* (Paris: Fayard, 1996), 138–141.

⁷ Baggioni, *Langues et nations*, 253.

⁸ Einar Haugen, *Language Conflict and Language Planning: The Case of Modern Norwegian* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966); Louis-Jean Calvet, *Les Politiques linguistiques* (Paris: PUF, 1996).

media is an essential mechanism for “creating” a modern national community. The suppression, by means of standard language, of a patchwork of traditional dialects and idioms marks the passage from a plurality of local and regional pre-national identities to what Ernest Gellner terms national “high culture.” The link between the standardization of national languages and the construction of national ideologies, as well as between the social imposition of these languages and construction of large-scale national identities, has been the object of numerous studies.⁹ For instance, the process of “making” the French nation through standard French after the revolution of 1789 has been well-researched.¹⁰

Publications such as the four large volumes of István Fodor and Claude Hagège show to what extent political imperatives were integral to the formation of modern national languages all over the world—of the same languages that seem so “natural” for their speakers.¹¹ That is why, for Noam Chomsky, questions related to language are, above all, questions of power.¹² Other linguists, like Joshua Fishman, have analyzed the diverse imageries of national ideology concerning national language as well as the vernacular tongues as a symbolic source and a means of nationalist mobilization.¹³ The naming of languages, often problematic in itself, has also been the object of sociolinguistic and historical studies.¹⁴

⁹ Deborah Cameron et al., *Researching Language: Issues of Power and Method* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992); *The Social History of Language*, ed. Peter Burke and Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)—especially Jonathan Steinberg, “The Historian and the *Questione delle Lingua*”; Ralph Grillo, *Dominant Languages: Language and Hierarchy in Britain and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Olivia Smith, *The Politics of Language 1791–1819* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); *Language and Politics*, ed. William O’Barr and Jean O’Barr (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1976).

¹⁰ Renée Balibar and Dominique Laporte, *Le Français national. Politique et pratiques de la langue nationale sous la Révolution française* (Paris: Hachette, 1974); Michel de Certeau, Dominique Julia and Jacques Revel, *Une Politique de la langue. La révolution française et les patois* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975); Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen. The Modernization of Rural France 1870–1914* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1977).

¹¹ *Language Reform. History and Future. La Réforme des langues. Histoire et avenir. Sprachreform. Geschichte und Zukunft*, ed. István Fodor and Claude Hagège vol. 1–4 (Hamburg: Buske Verlag, 1983–1984, 1989).

¹² Noam Chomsky, *Language and Responsibility* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1979), 191.

¹³ Joshua Fishman, *In Praise of the Beloved Language: A Comparative View of Positive Ethnolinguistic Consciousness* (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1997); Joshua Fishman, *Language and Ethnicity in Minority Sociolinguistic Perspective* (Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, 1989)—especially “Language and Nationalism: Two Integrative Essays.”

¹⁴ *Le Nom des langues I. Les Enjeux de la nomination des langues*, ed. Andrée Tabouret-Keller (Louvain-la-Neuve: Peeters, 1997).

These studies put into question the presumption of the “natural character” of national language. The analysis of the circumstances, sometimes quite fortuitous, and of the implicit political strategies in linguistic standardization tends to deconstruct the Herderian impression created by every nationalism: the language as the hearth of the essential “traits” of a nation, as its *Volksgeist*. The age-old perfect continuity of national language is questioned by research that highlights the role not only of scholars and intellectuals but also of political figures in its construction. This role is no longer interpreted as a patriotic “contribution” *pro domo* but as an intentional *planning*—or even *engineering*. Thus traditional linguistics is forced to revisit some of the basic categories that it has been using uncritically. In this process, the “naturalness” of linguistics itself vanishes.¹⁵

In such a perspective, the concept of “language” is the first to be questioned: Chomsky doubts if it can be used in a “serious study.”¹⁶ One of the many weaknesses of the everyday notion of “language” is that the simplistic distinction between “languages” and “dialects” falls apart when one examines the process of *standardization* of national language. The sociolinguistic theories do not agree on the number and character of the stages of linguistic standardization. Nor do they share the same point of view about the identity or the difference between standardization and *normalization*. Certain scholars consider these two processes to be different in time, while others reject such fine distinctions.¹⁷ In any case, the emphasis on standardization/normalization tends to complicate the notion of “dialect” itself. The latter is often absent from the sociolinguistic analyses, namely because of its seemingly immutable, essentialist character.

In its place, sociolinguists such as Fishman suggest the concept of *language variety*. Unlike “dialect,” it does not denote a fixed linguistic position but only certain differences with regard to other varieties.¹⁸ Here, the “fixed position” refers to the traditional concept of the subordinate

¹⁵ As the French sociologist Bourdieu argues: Pierre Bourdieu, *Ce que parler veut dire. L'Economie des échanges linguistiques* (Paris: Fayard, 1982), 9. Bourdieu is particularly critical of the traditional view “that has proclaimed linguistics *the most natural among the social sciences* through the separation of the linguistic tool from its social conditions of production and usage.”

¹⁶ Chomsky, *Language and Responsibility*, 190.

¹⁷ Daniel Baggioni, “Norme linguistique et langue(s) nationale(s): variété des processus de construction des identités linguistiques nationales dans l'espace européen passé et présent,” in *Genèse de la norme linguistique* (Aix-en-Provence: Université de l'Aix-en-Provence, 1994), 28–32.

¹⁸ Joshua Fishman, *Sociolinguistics: A Brief Introduction* (Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1970).

status of dialect as a “sub-unit,” which *a priori* belongs to a “language” understood in national terms. On the contrary, through its emphasis on the linguistic community speaking a certain language variety, modern sociolinguistics sidesteps the risk of essentialization of non-standardized idioms in ethno-national categories. Thus, thanks to the abandonment of the distinction between “language” and “dialect” and to the promotion of the distinction between *non-standardized language variety* and *standardized/normalized variety*, the sociolinguists deconstruct the naturalization of national language.

In this way, the traditionalist view, presenting a “language” on maps as a shaded area with clear geographical boundaries, is today seriously contested. More recent studies suggest a constructivist conception that considers national language a product shaped by a political context. In this perspective, “language” is nothing more than “a dialect with an army,” to use the famous aphorism attributed to the Yiddish linguist Max Weinreich. On such a basis, the nebulous question about the “national status” of Macedonian can be discussed in a clearer manner. Instead of talking of “language” in general, one may analyze more concrete and well-defined realities: non-standardized variety vs. standard language.¹⁹

Synchronic Axis: Bulgarian—(Macedonian)—Serbian

In fact, the Bulgarian-Macedonian dispute is just one of several linguistic conflicts in Southeast Europe.²⁰ The Romanian-Moldovan controversy over the existence of a Moldovan language is quite similar, although perhaps not as heated. In all these contexts the linguists depart from a classical essentialist notion of identity that naturalizes linguistic phenomena. The language is presented as a geographically spatial category: it strictly follows the real or imaginary boundaries of a national “territory.” This

¹⁹ When speaking of “language” in general, Bulgarian scholars—just like their Macedonian colleagues—easily conflate “dialects” and standard languages, without much concern about the proper definition of the categories they use. But the sociolinguists are also not in agreement about the difference among categories like “standard language,” “linguistic norm” and “literary language.” Here, I will use these three terms as more or less equivalent, notwithstanding the distinctions and nuances established in the specialized studies. However, one must point out that the notion of “literary language” is the indigenous term used in both Bulgaria and former Yugoslav Macedonia (*bălgarski knizhoven ezik, makedonski literaturni jazik*).

²⁰ Louis-Jean Calvet, *La Guerre des langues et les politiques linguistiques* (Paris: Payot, 1987).

territory is divided into diverse dialects, and the expert gaze of the linguist can easily and clearly decide if a given dialect belongs to one or another language and, respectively, nation.

The history of the philological battles around Macedonia can nevertheless put into question the easy labeling of “dialects.” The disputes between specialists from Bulgaria and (former) Yugoslav Macedonia have an instructive pre-history. Namely, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Slavic Macedonian idioms were already the object of a fight between Bulgarian and *Serbian* scholars. The ideologists of these two nations tried to support, by referring to linguistic characteristics, their claims about the proper belonging of Ottoman Macedonia. The Bulgarian scholars and propagandists referred, for instance, to grammatical features of the Slavic vernacular in Macedonia such as the absence of the infinitive and of declension of substantives and adjectives, the presence of definite articles, usage of the short enclitical form of the personal pronoun as a possessive pronoun, common usage of the ancient Slavic aorist and a certain manner of forming the future simple tense.²¹

The Serbian opponents, in turn, put forward certain phonetic traits of Macedonian dialects as well as a part of the local lexicon that is similar to Serbian. For instance, Spiridon Gopčević (an astronomer by profession) referred to the place of the accent: he was exploiting the fact that in most of the Macedonian dialects the accent is antepenultimate or penultimate—*grosso modo* as in Serbian—while the Bulgarian accent often falls on the last syllable.²² Some vowels and consonants were instrumentalized more frequently in the dispute. The Serbian scholars indicated the Macedonian dorso-palatal *kj* and *gj*, product of iotacism of Proto-Slavic *tj* and *dj*, and identified them with their Serbo-Croat parallels *ć* and *đ*.²³ The Bulgarian specialists responded with the difference, which they thought “considerable,” between these Macedonian and Serbian phonemes and underscored the early presence in Macedonia of the standard Bulgarian

²¹ Such “proof” of the Bulgarian character of the Macedonian dialects can be found in abundant literature often published in Western European languages, such as Atanas Šopov (Ofejkoff), *La Macédoine au point de vue ethnographique, historique et philologique* (Philippopolis: Imprimerie centrale, 1887); Jordan Ivanov (Ivanoff), *Les Bulgares devant le Congrès de Paix. Documents historiques, ethnographiques et diplomatiques* (Bern: Paul Haupt, 1919); Stefan Mladenov, *Geschichte der bulgarischen Sprache* (Berlin and Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1929). Mladenov’s publication contains a map of a linguistic Greater Bulgaria consisting of almost all of geographic Macedonia, a quarter of Serbia, a substantial part of western Thrace and so on.

²² Spiridon Gopčević, *Makedonien und Alt-Serbien* (Vienna: Seidel und Sohn, 1889).

²³ Aleksandar Belić, *La Macédoine* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1919).

equivalents *sht* and *zhd*: the Serbian-like *kj* and *gj* have, from this point of view, the disadvantage of being latecomers.²⁴

In both Serbian and Bulgarian reasoning, the linguistic “proofs” went hand in hand with historical and ethnographic “data.” The philology was perceived as part of the same nationalist project as historiography and the study of folklore; all these disciplines were supposed to provide arguments to justify expansionist territorial plans. Belgrade scholars inevitably referred to the famous *slava*, which, in Serbia, is the celebration of the day of a Christian saint, holy protector of an individual or of a family: such a holiday is also celebrated in Macedonia.²⁵ The scholars from Sofia countered this fact by citing a long list of historical figures from Macedonia who were supposedly Bulgarian or, indeed, Bulgarian by self-identification—from the ninth-century creators of the Slavic alphabet, Cyril and Methodius, to Bulgarian “Revival era” intellectuals from the nineteenth century. The Serbs responded by citing the mighty figure of the fourteenth-century emperor Stefan Dušan, whose capital was in Skopje, and Marko Kraljević, a ruler of the town of Prilep, praised in innumerable South Slavic folk chants.

Thus, whenever the linguistic argument looked weak, Bulgarian and Serbian scholars appealed to ethnography and history—and vice versa. Sometimes, in the interest of national propaganda, the selective “truths” were reinforced with deliberately misleading arguments: for instance, Gopčević did not hesitate to present to a Western audience the “existence,” in Slavic Macedonian, of perfect declensions of nouns in seven cases—just as in Serbian—while explaining the absence of declensions in Bulgarian.

However, the Serbian and the Bulgarian canonic versions did not exhaust the repertoire of possible “linguistic” interpretations. In claiming a Hellenic identity for Macedonia, the Greek ideologists were hardly able to suggest the language of Macedonian Slavs as a viable argument. However, paradoxical though it may seem, there *were* such attempts. The

²⁴ In this case, the Bulgarian scholars were repeating the thesis of the Russian linguist Afanasiy Selishchev, *Makedonskie kodiki XVI–XVIII vekov. Ocherki po istoricheskoy etnografii i dialektologii Makedonii* (Sofia: MNI, 1933). Selishchev took himself part in the polemics with Serbian specialists: Afanasiy Selishchev, “Makedonskaya dialektologiya i serbskie lingvisty. A. Belich i ego posledovateli,” *Makedonski pregled* 1–4 (1935).

²⁵ About the ethnographic “wars” between Serbs and Bulgarians concerning the festivity of *slava*: Petko Hristov, “Za propagandnata upotreba na praznika (‘Srābskata’ slava i/ili ‘bālgarskiyat’ sābor),” accessed June 24, 2011, <http://litenet.bg/publish7/phristov/praznika.htm>.

teacher Konstantinos Tsioulkas referred to Greek loanwords in the local Slavic vernacular and to common Indo-European roots of selected Greek and Slavic words. His conclusion was that Slavic Macedonian was a corrupted version of ancient Macedonian—in other words, a form of Greek.²⁶ And more importantly, since the 1890s, another idea sought legitimacy in international Slavic studies: the thesis that the Slavic Macedonian vernacular was neither Serbian nor Bulgarian but a distinct Slavic language.

This interpretation found its first supporters in Russia. Surprisingly, the first Russian proponent of the distinct character of Macedonian was an ethnic Bulgarian from Bessarabia: Petăr Draganov, a one-time teacher at the Bulgarian high school in Salonika. In 1890 the Estonian Leonhard Masing defended the first doctoral thesis discussing a separate Slavic Macedonian language. The latter was promoted, at the same time, by famous Russian Slavists such as Pyotr A. Lavrov and Jan Baudouin de Courtenay (of French-Polish origin).

The thesis of a distinct Slavic Macedonian idiom was largely meant to demonstrate the existence, in Macedonia, of a Slavic *nationality* distinct from Bulgarians and Serbs. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, St. Petersburg was trying to sustain a balance between Bulgarian and Serbian influence in Macedonia, and the idea that the local Slavs were neither Serbs nor Bulgarians was welcome. As the Bulgarian national influence upon Macedonians was much more important than the Serbian one—fewer locals self-identified as Serbian—the same thesis was also useful for Serbia. In European ethnography, it was largely promoted by the Balkans' best-known geographer and geologist, Jovan Cvijić. As early as 1906, he insisted that the Macedonian Slavs were a “floating amorphous mass” without nationhood and could develop either Bulgarian or Serbian identity.²⁷

This theory proved politically successful during the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Unlike Belgrade, Sofia was in the defeated camp, and the thesis of Slavic Macedonian as a distinct language served to demonstrate that the Bulgarians did not have more ethnic “rights” over geographic Macedonia than the Serbs. This idea was embraced in particular by French linguists associated with those drawing the new state boundaries in Europe. Antoine Meillet explained that, regarding the character of the

²⁶ Konstantinos Tsioulkas, *Symbolai eis tin diglossian ton Makedonon ek synkriseos tis slavofanous makedonikis glossis pros tin Ellinikin* (Athens, 1907).

²⁷ Jovan Cvijić, “Promatranja o etnografiji Makedonskih Slovena” (Belgrade, 1906); Jovan Cvijić, *Remarques sur l'ethnographie de la Macédoine* (Paris: Roustan, 1907).

Slavic idiom in Macedonia, “the neutral linguists may only abstain from giving an opinion” and that “it is politics that will decide the linguistic future of Macedonia.” Meillet nevertheless contributed to the political verdict with his declaration that this idiom did not belong either to Bulgarian or to Serbian.²⁸ In 1938 another French linguist—André Vaillant—found enough reasons to affirm that Macedonian was a distinct language (although in the framework of a particular “Macedono-Bulgarian group”) and that a Macedonian *literary* language had existed as early as the nineteenth century.²⁹ That same year, the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* included an article entitled “Macedonian Language,” written by the Soviet linguist Samuil Bernstein, who was also a specialist in Bulgarian.³⁰

Today, linguists and historians from the former Yugoslav Macedonia praise the “objectivity” of these writings. In the same way, the Bulgarian scholars refer uncritically to the “objectivity” of those who share their views. They point, for instance, to the *Ethnography of Macedonia* published in 1924 by the German linguist Gustav Weigand, a specialist in Balkan Romance languages.³¹ Weigand believed that Macedonian could be regarded only as a dialectal version of Bulgarian.

However, nowadays, the categorical assertion of the Bulgarian (and even more so of the Serbian) character of Macedonian Slavic language provokes suspicions of partiality and deliberate pursuit of a nationalist agenda. These suspicions are surely well-grounded: the Serbo-Bulgarian quarrels about Macedonia from the early twentieth century sufficiently compromised a number of Western scholars who got involved in them. The appearance, after 1944, of a Macedonian linguistic norm lent further credibility to the Meillet-Vaillant perspective. Does this mean that the idea of the distinctive character of Macedonian—neither Serbian nor Bulgarian—is perfectly legitimate, although it can also be backed up with political arguments? Could this thesis be the most objective one?

The crystallization, in the field of Slavic studies, of a third linguistic pole between Serbian and Bulgarian has certainly made the situation more complex than the one in the early twentieth century. In general, the linguists of Sofia employ the argument already used in the Serbo-Bulgarian

²⁸ Antoine Meillet, *Les Langues dans l'Europe nouvelle* (Paris: Payot, 1928).

²⁹ André Vaillant, “Le Problème du slave macédonien,” *Bulletin de la Société de linguistique de Paris* 39 (1938).

³⁰ Samuil Bernstein, “Makedonskiy yazyk,” in *Bol'shaya sovetskaya ěnciklopediya* (Moscow, 1938).

³¹ Gustav Weigand, *Ethnographie von Makedonien* (Leipzig: Friedrich Brandstetter, 1924).

polemics. They refer to the common grammatical features of the idioms in Bulgaria and in Macedonia, such as the absence of declensions, the post-positive definite articles, the absence of the infinitive and its definitive replacement with a descriptive form, and the construction of the future tense. Their colleagues in Skopje reply using, with varying degrees of caution, some of the points of the Serbian scholars, like the consonants *kj* and *gj*. However, their arsenal is richer and, in many respects, different from that of Belgrade.

The modern Macedonian argument relies chiefly on linguistic characteristics deemed exclusively Macedonian and by no means shared with Bulgarian and/or Serbian. Some of them had already been emphasized by specialists such as Vaillant. These are, for instance:

- 1) the fixed antepenultimate accent. In Serbian it is mobile and it can fall on the second or on the fourth syllable. In Bulgarian it is often on the first syllable from the end of the word, while in Macedonian it is always on the third syllable if there is one;
- 2) three forms for the definite article (one for immediately close and another one for distant persons and objects, as well as a third one which is universal—only the last one exists in Bulgarian);
- 3) forms of past perfect tense of the kind *have* + past participle (for instance, *imam videno*—literally, “I have seen”—a construction that is identical to the one in English, German and the Romance languages, as well as in Modern Greek and Albanian, but nonexistent in Bulgarian and Serbian).³²

Some of these characteristics were emphasized as early as the mid-nineteenth century by the Bulgarian bishop Parteniy/ja Zografski.³³ Born in western Macedonia, he seems to have clearly perceived the dissimilarity between the Bulgarian and the Macedonian accent, which makes the acoustical effect of the two idioms quite different.³⁴

Nevertheless, an essentialist definition of this kind faces two major problems. The presumed characteristics of Macedonian 1) are not typical of the totality of what is deemed “Macedonian linguistic territory” because some

³² For instance, Blaže Koneski, *Za makedonskiot literaturni jazik* (Skopje: Kultura, 1967).

³³ Parteniy Zografski, “Misli za bolgarskiot jazik,” *Bălgarski knizhitsi* 1 (1858).

³⁴ Horace Lunt, “The Creation of Standard Macedonian: Some Facts and Attitudes,” *Anthropological Linguistics* 5 (1959): 22.

of the vernacular Slavic dialects in Macedonia display different traits, and 2) some of the “typical Macedonian” characteristics are actually shared by dialects outside Macedonia, considered also by Macedonian scholars to be Bulgarian or Serbian.

For instance, the antepenultimate accent is not typical of the Slavic dialects of northern, eastern and southern Macedonia: some of them have a predominantly penultimate accent, while others do not have a fixed accent at all. Three forms of the definite article are also to be found in the speech of Bulgarian Christians and Muslims in the Rhodope Mountains and in other places in Bulgaria. At the same time, many of the dialects perceived as Macedonian (Štip and Maleševo in the eastern part of the Republic of Macedonia, Gevgelija in the south, Gorna Dzhumaya/Blagoevgrad in Bulgaria’s Pirin region) have one single type of article.³⁵

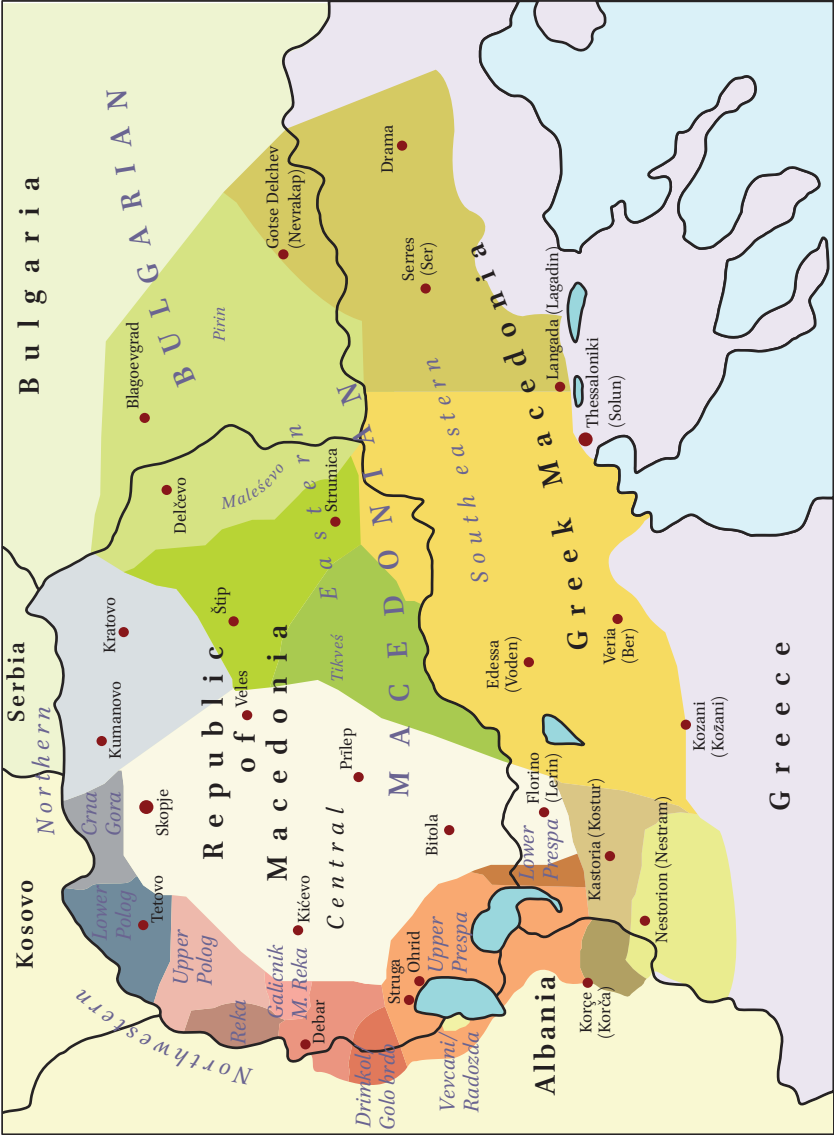
Bulgarian polemical literature readily provides many other parallels between what the Macedonian specialists see as a “typical Macedonian feature” and linguistic phenomena that existed or still exist in western, and even in eastern, Bulgaria. These features remained outside the Bulgarian standard norm, sometimes completely inadvertently.³⁶ Conversely, the same literature indicates convincingly that many of the “Macedonian” traits actually characterize the west-central dialect—the basis of the contemporary Macedonian standard language—but not the other idioms in geographic Macedonia, especially those in the east and in the south.

The (sometimes considerable) differences among all these dialects³⁷ hardly make it possible to speak unambiguously of *the* Macedonian language as such. Hence the objectivity of scholars asserting that “Macedonian” is neither Serbian nor Bulgarian might seem doubtful: *which* Macedonian do they mean? One can easily object to the inclusion, under this rubric, of the dialect of Nevrokop (today the town of Gotse Delchev). Although in geographic Macedonia (in the Pirin region), it is in many respects a variety of *eastern* Bulgarian, closer to the Rhodopian dialects than to those in western Macedonia. Or what about the vernacular idiom of Kumanovo, so similar to the dialects of southern Serbia? And if these are marginal examples, what about regions such as Štip, whose patterns of speech are denigrated as incorrect and exotic by Macedonians who speak

³⁵ See the professional polemicist Kosta Tsarnushanov, *Makedonizmat i sãprotivata na Makedoniya sreshtu nego* (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo, 1992), 409–410.

³⁶ For instance, Ivan Kochev, “Bãlgarskiyat ezik v Makedoniya,” in *Makedoniya. Istoriya i politicheska sãdba*, ed. Dimitãr Gotsev et al., vol. 3 (Stara Zagora: Znanie, 1998), 221–235.

³⁷ Friedman, “The Sociolinguistics,” 38–40.



Source: Wikipedia, accessed June 24, 2011, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Macedonian_Slavic_dialects.png

Map 6. Macedonian Slavic dialects.

the standard language? Obviously, when they drew the clear-cut boundaries of a language situated between Bulgarian and Serbian, the contemporary Macedonian linguists chose selectively and put a certain label on a geographic zone defined on purely political grounds.

But, *mutatis mutandis*, the same holds true for the claims of the Bulgarian specialists as well as for those of their Serbian colleagues. A geographical and linguistic continuity exists not only between the dialects of Bulgaria and those of Macedonia but also between both of these on the one hand and the idiom of southeastern Serbia on the other. The substantives and the adjectives in the latter do not have the seven cases of the standard Serbian either, the aorist is commonly used, the future tense is formed more or less in the same manner as Bulgarian/Macedonian, and so on. This is the reason why Bulgarian scholars traditionally include in the "Bulgarian linguistic territory" the so-called Torlak dialects of the Prizren-Timok area (*Prizrensko-Timočka zona*) in Serbia. The same zone includes the city of Niš—today Serbia's third-largest city.³⁸

And, of course, there is—or least was—the reverse claim: scholars from Belgrade referred to a number of other characteristics and expanded the Serbian linguistic area deep into western Bulgaria, including the capital city, Sofia. Some of these claims were certainly not so absurd: "Bulgarian" dialects along the Serbian border have, even now, a rudimentary declension of nouns that is not at all typical of the standard language of the state. Given all these details, one is tempted to ask whether it is possible at all to draw an exact "border" between Serbian and Bulgarian.

Despite the traditional partisan passions of philologists, the most likely answer is certainly *not*. In vast dialectal continuums like that of the South Slavic languages, tracing linguistic boundaries that imply "national" distinctiveness is a purely ideological matter.³⁹ As one travels from Trieste and the Julian Alps to the Black Sea, the phonetic, morphological and other traits of the Slavic language varieties change gradually. The idioms of the two extreme points are undoubtedly mutually unintelligible: apart from a very limited basic vocabulary, a monolingual Bulgarian would not understand the native tongue of a Slovene, and vice versa. But between these extreme cases—at least before the social diffusion of the South Slavic standard languages—neither the lexicon nor the grammatical

³⁸ Mladenov, *Geschichte*, and Benyu Tsonev, *Istoriya na bălgarskiy ezik* (Sofia, 1934).

³⁹ Friedman, "The Modern Macedonian," 174–175; Friedman, "The Sociolinguistics," 35–36.

features of two neighboring geographical points were so different that reciprocal understanding was impossible. There was, on the contrary, a gradual passage from one pattern of speech to the other, a continuity in the heterogeneity.⁴⁰

The national name that is given to dialects is a virtual category that cuts into pieces the real continuity.⁴¹ On the one hand, the non-standard South Slavic language varieties followed one another geographically without respect to political boundaries or territorial claims. On the other, certain lines of isoglosses often divide territories whose inhabitants considered themselves and were/are considered to be members of the same ethnic group or nation. This is the case, for instance, for the so-called *Yat* boundary cutting contemporary Bulgaria into two major parts according to the modern pronunciation of an ancient Slavic vowel (*e* to the west and *ya* to the east, respectively). Furthermore, this boundary is approximately the same for a number of parallel isoglosses delimiting distinct grammatical features and vocabulary. The situation is similar in other South Slavic contexts. In general, the Serbian pronunciation is ekavian—that is, the Serbs pronounce the *Yat* as *e*, just as the western Bulgarians and the Macedonians do. But the Bosnian Serbs and the Montenegrins articulate it in a jekavian way as *(i)je*—similarly to the Bosnian Muslims and the Croats. The latter speak three distinct mega-dialects—kajkavian (close in many respects to Slovene), čakavian and mostly štokavian. However, the last one is also the idiom of the Serbs, the Bosniaks and the Montenegrins.⁴² On the basis of dialects, one can hardly say with certainty what is Croatian and what is Serbian.

Launched during the construction of modern South Slavic nations, the language policies exerted a dual action. On the one hand, they marginalized certain regions and their dialects. Kajkavian, which had an old literary tradition and was spoken even in the Croatian capital, Zagreb, was abandoned without appeal in the formation of a standard language. In

⁴⁰ Patrick Sériot, "La Linguistique spontanée des traceurs de frontières," in *Langue et nation en Europe centrale et orientale du XVIII^{ème} siècle à nos jours*, ed. Patrick Sériot (Lausanne: Université de Lausanne, 1996), 278–280.

⁴¹ Patrick Sériot, "Faut-il que les langues aient un nom?" in *Le Nom des langues I. Les Enjeux de la nomination des langues*, ed. Andrée Tabouret-Keller (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium: Peeters, 1997), 172.

⁴² Paul Garde, "Langue et nation: le cas serbe, croate et bosniaque," in *Langue et nation en Europe centrale et orientale du XVIII^{ème} siècle à nos jours*, ed. Patrick Sériot (Lausanne: Université de Lausanne, 1996), 123–147. See Ronelle Alexander's contribution to the present volume.

1850 Croatian philologists and their Serbian colleagues decided to build a common standard norm (Serbo-Croatian) on the basis of štokavian. Later, standard Croatian remained faithful to this dialectal basis. At the same time, the choice of Vuk Karadžić's native eastern Herzegovina dialect as the basis of Serbian and Serbo-Croatian isolated the speakers of the vernacular language varieties of southern Serbia, Macedonia and western Bulgaria.

It should be noted that the same populations were also marginalized by the formation of standard Bulgarian on the basis of eastern Bulgarian dialects.⁴³ That is why it is only retroactively that regions such as the kajkavian in Croatia or Torlak and Šop between Niš and Sofia are perceived as "transitory zones" between Slovene and Croatian, and Serbian and Bulgarian, respectively. It is only because of the same anachronism that Macedonian has sometimes been spoken of, even today, as a "transitory" language or dialect (*Übergangsdialekt*) between Bulgarian "proper" and Serbian "proper."

On the other hand, modern language policies and nation-building created an identity where it did not necessarily exist before and imposed it over local linguistic contexts. In the (current) border regions between Bulgaria and Serbia, the local population spoke the same dialect, but after it was split (in 1878) between Serbia and Bulgaria, each part developed a distinct national identity.⁴⁴ In Macedonia, the process of national formation continued until the inhabitants of, for instance, Kriva Palanka (a town in northeastern Macedonia), who initially spoke the same dialect as the "Bulgarians" and the "Serbs" from the neighboring regions, became "Macedonians."⁴⁵

⁴³ The term "eastern dialects" does not necessarily denote the easternmost part of contemporary Bulgaria, as a number of international publications suppose. It instead refers to the idioms around the central and eastern part of the Balkan (Stara planina) mountain range, amalgamated with traits of the dialects in northern Bulgaria (Moesia). On the construction of standard Bulgarian: Grigoriy Venediktov, *Bolgarskii literaturnyy yazyk ėpohi Vozrozhdeniya. Problemy normalizatsii i vybora dialektnoy osnovy* (Moscow: Nauka, 1990); Rusin Rusinov, *Istoriya na novobălgarskiya knizhoven ezik* (Veliko Tărnovo: Abagar, 1999).

⁴⁴ See the article of Hristov, "Za propagandnata." As Bulgarian scholars never fail to emphasize, before 1878, Niš, Piroć and Vranje in what is today southern Serbia were part of the Bulgarian Church (Exarchate) diocese with a certain pro-Bulgarian intelligentsia. However, the brief period of Serbian administration in Trăn or Breznik in west Bulgaria was enough for the formation of a pro-Serbian local elite.

⁴⁵ An anecdote circulating among specialists in South Slavic languages says that there would be no distinct Serbian, Bulgarian and Macedonian languages if Vuk Karadžić had been born in Vranje (southern Serbia), Marin Drinov (author of the first Bulgarian standard orthography and founder of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) in Kyustendil (western

These—purely political—aspects of the construction of South Slavic standard languages are the reason why some linguists ask the question “Do languages need names?”⁴⁶ A possible conclusion is that the national designation of languages and dialects is not itself a problem for linguists. Linguists can only establish or analyze degrees of phonetic, morphological or syntactic resemblance and/or difference but cannot assign national names—that is, if they want to remain linguists. And if the standard languages, *a priori* related to the construction of nations, certainly have names, this is not necessarily valid for non-standard language varieties. Determining whether a given South Slavic dialect belongs to a given language is not a linguistic task—it is sociopolitical.⁴⁷ As far as Macedonia is concerned, the question of whether a given dialect is (or was) Bulgarian, Serbian or Macedonian is simply badly formulated. Any answer to such a question is inevitably ideological and partial.

Diachronic Axis: Macedonian avant la lettre

The sociolinguistic accent on the context of language policies and standardization processes helps to circumvent the nationalistic responses so typical of Bulgarian and Macedonian philologists. But after dispersing the illusions of national imagination, the researchers of modern language-planning can face other sets of questions that traditional national historians and mainstream linguists would gladly pose.

Let us accept that what one naively deems to be the national “language” actually represents a complex reality consisting of at least two language varieties (standard and non-standard) that should be treated differently. Let us accept that in dialectal continuums such as the South Slavic one, there are no firmly set boundaries between “national” areas. Finally, let us admit that if the standard language is part of nation-building, the “dialects” that precede it do not have nationhood. Given all that, how should we deal with the fact that speakers of certain non-standard language varieties gave them ethnic or national *names*? In the case of Macedonian, the situation is made more complicated by the fact that, in their first attempts at linguistic self-description, local Slavic intellectuals did not use the term

Bulgaria) and Blaže Koneski, the codifier of Macedonian, in Kriva Palanka. Unfortunately the three of them came from different regions.

⁴⁶ Sériot, “Faut-il que les langues,” 189.

⁴⁷ Friedman, “The Sociolinguistics,” 36.

“Macedonian,” or did not use the term to the exclusion of other designations. Finally, what about the historical continuity of Macedonian?

This is a rather delicate question. Of course, a language never appears *ex nihilo*, and the problem of its historical continuity is relevant for linguistics. There are fields of research, such as historical grammar, that deal with earlier stages of evolution of a certain idiom. And sociolinguists cannot escape from the historical questions as long as they work on social and political conditions of language planning. Thus ethnic and national names barge back into the work of the linguist, and s/he cannot evict them so easily.

Here the solution depends largely on the personal sympathies and/or political commitment of the scholar. Macedonian linguists and their supporters do not hesitate to assert the existence of a distinct Macedonian linguistic and literary tradition. For instance, the main codifier of modern Macedonian—Blaže Koneski—is convinced that the first literary usages of his native language, showing clear differences from the Bulgarian language, are found in the production of the so-called Ohrid School in the late ninth and early tenth centuries. Unfortunately, he himself cannot explain how it is possible that many of the “Macedonian particularities” from that phase later characterize Bulgarian rather than Macedonian (for instance, the abundant use of the suffix *-tel*).⁴⁸ The distinction between Bulgarian and Macedonian, in an era when the distinction of Slavic “national” languages in general is problematic, is clearly anachronistic.

Perhaps that is why the American linguist Victor Friedman prefers to put aside the medieval era and to concentrate on more recent evolutions—namely, of the late Ottoman period. He suggests that the development of the modern Macedonian language—and of the modern Macedonian national identity—can be periodized into four consecutive stages: from the late eighteenth century until the early 1840s, between the 1840s and the 1870s, between the 1870s and 1913 and, finally, between 1913 and 1944.⁴⁹ In this way, Friedman regards the final achievement—the codification of the Macedonian norm since 1944—as the “logical continuation” of a process dating back at least a century and a half. He firmly rejects the idea that this norm appeared by fiat after World War II. Like the philologists from Skopje, Friedman believes that the normalization of Macedonian began with Daniel Moscopolites’s famous *Tetraglosson* (1794), a lexicon

⁴⁸ Blaže Koneski, *Istoriја na makedonskiot јазик* (Skopje: Kočo Racin, 1965), 180–181.

⁴⁹ Friedman, “The Modern Macedonian,” 193–194.

of four languages. Early nineteenth-century church authors such as Joakim Krčovski/Kärchovski and Kiril Pejčinovikj/Peychinovich also used vernacular Slavic varieties.

Unfortunately, none of these authors called his language “Macedonian.” Daniel, an Aromanian intellectual from Moscopole (today Voskopojë in Albania), referred to the local Slavic language as “Bulgarian” (*Voulgarika*). Krčovski stated he was using “simple Bulgarian language” (*prostějšij jazyk Bolgarskij*), instead of high Church Slavonic, and the same holds true for Pejčinovikj (*preprostějšym i ne knižnym jazykom Bolgarskim*). The next historical figure in the “Macedonian” list, Teodosij Sinaitski, who in 1838 founded a printing house in Salonika, also called his language “Bulgarian.” In general, these first authors’ views were far from the modern national ideology: through the use of vernacular idiom, they were instead trying to transmit moral and religious messages to a wider audience. However, Bulgarian nationalism soon found ardent supporters in Macedonia.

The link between the two “periods” could be exemplified by Neofit Rilski from Bansko, in the Pirin region, who as early as 1835 edited the first grammar of modern “Bulgarian.” He was followed by figures from Macedonia emblematic of Bulgarian nationalism, such as Dimităr (Dimitrija) and Konstantin Miladinov: in 1861 they published an important collection of “Bulgarian folk songs,” most of them recorded in Macedonia. The Bulgarian national pantheon from Macedonia continues with the names of Grigor Părlichev/Prličev, Kuzman Shapkarev/Šapkarev, Rajko Žinzifov/Rayko Zhinzifov and others. Although today Macedonian historiography claims them as Macedonian national heroes, all of them called their native tongue “Bulgarian” and explicitly subscribed to the agenda of Bulgarian nationalism.⁵⁰ Facing this fact, the Macedonian scholars and their supporters “solve” the problem thus: the authors from the nineteenth century “called their language *Bulgarian*, but since their dialects were Macedonian, they can be considered the first to publish books in some form of Macedonian.”⁵¹ Dialectological essentialism thus provides the necessary reasons when the data from the past are inconvenient.

However, it must be noted that the Macedonian specialists do not completely disrespect the historical terms. The Slavic intellectuals from nineteenth-century Macedonia likewise used the term “Macedonian”—

⁵⁰ See the representative collection of their writings: *Bălgarski vāzrozhdenski knižovnitsi ot Makedoniya. Izbrani stranitsi* (Sofia: BAN, 1983).

⁵¹ Friedman, “The Modern Macedonian,” 177. He refers to Koneski, *Istorija*, 88.

and especially for their tongue. Moreover, they insisted that it must be codified. One of the cases most emphasized in former Yugoslav Macedonia is that of the aforementioned Parteniy Zografski. In an article published in 1858, he suggested the usage of “the Macedonian idiom” (*Makedonskoto narečie*) as a basis of the “common written language.” The text explicitly calls the latter “Bulgarian,” but the expression “common language” is interpreted by the linguist Blaže Koneski (and after him by all those in Macedonian historiography) as referring to a project to establish a Bulgarian-Macedonian linguistic “compromise” similar to the one between Serbs and Croats.⁵²

Here, once again, there is a serious risk of anachronistic over-interpretation. According to Parteniy Zografski: “Our language, as is well-known, is divided into two principal idioms (or dialects [*narečija*]); the first one is used in Bulgaria and in Thrace, while the second one is used in Macedonia.”⁵³ Himself a Bulgarian teacher and bishop, Parteniy actually regarded his native tongue as a version of Bulgarian; the “common” language was common for all Bulgarians and not a “compromise” between two nations and national languages. Only a year earlier, Parteniy used the designation “low Bulgarian” (*dolnobolgarski*) for “Macedonian” and even called Macedonia “Old Bulgaria.”⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the hermeneutics of the 1858 text are complicated by the fact that the Serbian language is also qualified as an idiom or “dialect” (*narečie*).

One thing is clear: during a certain period, the “Macedonian-Bulgarian” intellectuals were reluctant to give up their native tongue for the sake of the creation of standard Bulgarian. The problem was that since the mid-nineteenth century, the literary production in eastern Bulgarian dialects was far more important than the one in western Bulgarian and Macedonian. The standard Bulgarian language, in the process of codification, had a clearly eastern Bulgarian character: it was different in many respects from the geographically distant dialects of Macedonia. Hence, ten years after Parteniy Zografski’s article, the problem of the usage of Macedonian idiom for literary purposes remained and provoked harsh debates. In the late 1860s the teacher and writer from Ohrid Kuzman Šapkarev criticized the dominance of eastern Bulgarian and even declared that it was incomprehensible in Macedonia. In his *Great Bulgarian Textbook*

⁵² Blaže Koneski, *Kon makedonskata prerodba. Makedonskite učebnici od 19 vek* (Skopje: INI, 1959), 26–43; Friedman, “The Modern Macedonian,” 180.

⁵³ *Bălgarski vāzrozhdenski knizhovnitsi*, 195.

⁵⁴ *Tsarigradski vestnik*, February 9, 1857.

(*Golēma bălgarska čitanka*) from 1868, he stated his intention to write in a language understandable to his compatriots, the “Macedonian Bulgarians” (*makedonskyte bălgari*). He also announced a project of a dictionary that would contain translations from “Macedonian” into “Upper Bulgarian” (*gornobălgarsky*) and vice versa.⁵⁵

This activity was condemned by the Bulgarian press, which even accused Kuzman Šapkarev of advocating the existence of a separate Macedonian language and of a distinct history of Macedonian people.⁵⁶ Šapkarev is not the only one who elicited such reactions: when the teacher and Uniate priest Veniamin Mačukovski declared his ambition to write a “Bulgarian grammar according to the Macedonian idiom,” the Bulgarian press was no more tolerant.⁵⁷ Natives of central and eastern Bulgaria were often not ready to accept the Macedonian dialects as “proper Bulgarian”: they were seen by Šapkarev and Mačukovski’s critics as an idiom corrupted by Albanian, Aromanian, Greek or Serbian influence. The language of Parteniy Zografski in particular was referred to as a “mixture of Bulgarian and Serbian.”⁵⁸

However, it would be farfetched to interpret the linguistic debates between authors from (eastern and central) Bulgaria and Macedonia from the 1860s and 1870s as a conflict between two national camps. Nothing in the activity of those “Macedonian Bulgarian” writers suggests that they perceived their “Macedonian” tongue as something essentially different from the Bulgarian language or sought to codify a separate literary norm. What was at stake was the definition of the proper basis for the codification of the Bulgarian language, and the opinions were even more varied than that.

On the one hand, the “Macedonian camp” was far from any consensus. Kuzman Šapkarev’s promotion of his native dialect of Ohrid was attacked by an author who claimed to be “a true Macedonian.”⁵⁹ Josif Kovačev, a teacher from the Macedonian town of Štip, proposed the Šop dialect as a basis for the codification of Bulgarian, because of its intermediate position between the dialects of Bulgaria and Macedonia.⁶⁰ On the other hand, it was not only the Macedonians who were accused of speaking “poor

⁵⁵ *Bălgarski vāzrozhdenski knizhovnitsi*, 225–227.

⁵⁶ *Den*, June 9, 1875; *Pravo*, November 30, 1870.

⁵⁷ *Pravo*, October 30, 1872; cf. Blaže Ristovski, *Portreti i procesi od makedonskata literaturna i nacionalna istorija*, vol. 1 (Skopje: Kultura, 1989), 148–184.

⁵⁸ *Bălgarski knizhitsi*, September 15, 1858.

⁵⁹ *Pravo*, November 30, 1870; cf. Friedman, “The Modern Macedonian,” 181.

⁶⁰ *Bălgarski vāzrozhdenski knizhovnitsi*, 340–346.

Bulgarian." Intellectuals from central and eastern Bulgaria such as Ivan Bogorov or Yoakim Gruev, as well as the inhabitants of towns such as Koprivshitsa and Tărnovo, symbolic of the Bulgarian national movement, faced similar accusations.⁶¹ Important authors from Bulgaria (Georgi Rakovski, Vasil Stoyanov, Hristo Danov, Petko Slaveykov) also demonstrated some tolerance towards the use of Macedonian dialects.

In any case, Bulgarian language-planning did not support the latter. Few characteristics of Macedonian (or of western Bulgarian) dialects were accepted in the modern Bulgarian language. The best-known example is the typical Macedonian Slavic gerundive (*deeprichastie*) existing in standard Bulgarian. Macedonian—or rather, “Macedonian-Bulgarian”—intellectuals in the late Ottoman period were obliged to conform to the eastern Bulgarian norm. As early as 1870, Marin Drinov, organizer of the Bulgarian Literary Society (later the Academy of Sciences), rejected Šapkarev’s proposal for a mixed eastern- and western Bulgarian/Macedonian foundation of the standard language.⁶²

And another question arises here: in what national terms should we interpret the nineteenth-century works written in Macedonian Slavic vernacular? While the Bulgarian linguists include them in the history of the standardization of the modern Bulgarian language,⁶³ the Macedonian linguists perceive them indubitably as precedents of the normalization of Macedonian. But in fact, both of the scholar communities have a problem. The Bulgarians might be consistent with the national self-identification of the intellectuals in question. However, they underplay the fact that their native idioms were finally discarded in the construction of modern Bulgarian. The Macedonians are perhaps right to indicate the contemporary Macedonian norm as a continuation of language varieties used in the works of Dimităr and Konstantin Miladinov, Parteniy Zografski or Kuzman Šapkarev. But they minimize the fact that these authors did not claim a national identity other than Bulgarian and that their Macedonian self-identification did not go beyond regionalism.

The claims of a separate Macedonian linguistic identity and literary tradition going back to the Middle Ages or to the nineteenth century

⁶¹ Venediktov, *Bolgarskiy*, 178.

⁶² *Makedoniya*, July 31, 1870.

⁶³ *Pars pro toto*, Stoyan Zharev, “Tvorchestvoto na Konstantin Miladinov ot gledishte na istoriyata na bălgarskiya knizhoven ezik,” *Bălgarski ezik* 4 (1971); Rusin Rusinov, “Kuzman Shapkarev v istoriyata na bălgarskiya knizhoven ezik prez vtorata polovina na XIX v.,” *Bălgarski ezik* 4 (1984).

seem poorly substantiated. Not coincidentally, in his theory of *Abstand* and *Ausbau* languages, the sociolinguist Heinz Kloss treats Macedonian and Bulgarian as two standard norms that—in their “pre-literary” stage—could be categorized as a single language.⁶⁴ And by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were still not two standard norms. By that time, the Slavic intelligentsia from Macedonia was mostly educated in Bulgarian schools, where it adopted the standard language based on the eastern Bulgarian dialects.

However, some Macedonians attended Greek and Serbian schools. Belgrade and Athens competed with the newly proclaimed Bulgarian state for the loyalty of the local Slavic population. The struggle between the Bulgarian Exarchate and the Constantinople “Greek” Patriarchate was similar. It must be emphasized that Bulgarian, Serbian and Greek nationalist propaganda was promoted actively by people from Macedonia. But in the harsh conflict between them, a fourth national option crystallized: the Macedonian one.

Macedonian nationalism had antecedents as early as the 1870s. In 1875 Gjorgjija Pulevski, a master builder and political activist from the western Macedonian village of Galičnik, published in Belgrade a *Dictionary of Three Languages* that asserted the distinctive identity of the Slavic-Macedonian language and “people.” After Pulevski, Macedonian nationalism found its expression in the works of journalists active in the first decade of the twentieth century, such as Stefan Dedov, Diamandija Mišajkov and Dimitrija Čupovski. The most famous member of this circle is undoubtedly Krste Misirkov (b. 1874 in Postol, today Pella in Greek Macedonia—d. 1926 in Sofia). In 1903 Misirkov published the political pamphlet *On Macedonian Matters*,⁶⁵ where he laid the foundation for a separate Macedonian linguistic norm. It is quite intriguing that the dialectal basis chosen by Misirkov—the so-called “western-central” dialect—is identical to that of the present-day norm of the former Yugoslav republic. In many respects Misirkov’s principles of codification and lexicon as well as his orthography—clearly inspired by the Serbian phonetic graphic of Vuk Karadžić—are strikingly similar to the current ones.

Here, the Serbian “connection” is not by chance. Most of the early ideologists of Macedonian nationalism had been educated in diverse national

⁶⁴ The same being the case for Czech and Slovak: Heinz Kloss, “‘Abstand Languages’ and ‘Ausbau Languages,’” *Anthropological Linguistics* 7 (1967): 31–32.

⁶⁵ Krste Misirkov, *Za makedonckite raboti* (Sofia, 1903).

settings, most notably the one in Belgrade. Some of them were overtly pro-Serbian and explicitly promoted the introduction of Serbian loanwords into the Macedonian language, in order to counter the Bulgarian influence.⁶⁶ Misirkov's intention was similar: he also introduced a certain amount of Serbian vocabulary, invented new characters according to Vuk's model and chose a dialect that—in his view—was different enough from Bulgarian. In fact, he also insisted on the difference between this dialect and Serbian. But the main targets of criticism in his *Macedonian Matters* are certainly the Bulgarian state, the Bulgarian Church and the pro-Bulgarian revolutionaries from the Secret Macedono-Adrianopolitan Revolutionary Organization (better known under its later acronym, IMRO).

Do the works of Misirkov and of the other “Macedonists” also belong to the history of the Bulgarian language? Answering in the affirmative would certainly sound strange: these first attempts to build a Macedonian norm are clearly directed against the Bulgarian linguistic domination over the Slavs of Ottoman Macedonia. They would certainly not be understandable without taking into account the Serbian educational influence. And one can imagine that they would be less possible if the Bulgarian standard language were based also on Macedonian dialects, as Šapkarev and the other “Macedonian-Bulgarian” intellectuals previously insisted. In this sense, the product of a historical conjuncture—the ultimate foundation of standard Bulgarian on an exclusively eastern Bulgarian basis—was largely decisive for the development of a separate Macedonian norm.

But this can also mean that Macedonian itself had a sufficient repertoire of specific traits that made possible the creation of a distinct standard language. According to the Macedonian scholars, these specificities required a norm that would be closer to the local Slavic vernacular than the Bulgarian norm, which was based on the distant eastern Bulgarian dialects. From such a point of view, the western-central (*zapadno-centralen*) dialect of Macedonia (previously also known as “central” or “central-western”) became, since the nineteenth century, “Macedonian” *par excellence*. There are believed to be several reasons for that: it covers a relatively large area—from Skopje to the north until Lerin (today Florina in Greece) to the south, through the areas of Prilep, Kičevo and Bitola. The other dialectal zones of Macedonia seem more fragmented.

⁶⁶ This is the case for Temko Popov(-ić). Pulevski even declared himself a “Serbian patriot”: Blaže Ristovski, *Soznajbi za jazikot, literaturata i nacijata* (Skopje: MANU, 2001), 207–208.

The western-central area includes important urban centers and is relatively homogenous, (compared to the rest of Macedonia), possessing an overwhelmingly Slavic population. Furthermore, the neighboring dialects share many characteristics with the western-central dialect, and the Macedonians from these areas do not face many problems in adapting their manners of speech to it.⁶⁷

Cases of authors who were not natives of the western-central region but who referred to or used its idiom—such as Misirkov—may only confirm this impression. For the linguists of Skopje, the dialect of Veles-Prilep-Bitola evolved into a supra-dialect—into what the sociolinguists call vehicular language—in a “natural” way.⁶⁸ Likewise, American specialists Horace Lunt and Victor Friedman believe that in August 1944, when the Yugoslav Macedonian partisans proclaimed the idiom based on the western-central dialect to be the official language, they were merely recognizing an already existing *status quo*.⁶⁹ Thus there is a historical continuity of Macedonian, at least from Krste Misirkov until Tito’s communist resistance.

This interpretation nevertheless faces a number of problems. Around the turn of the twentieth century—just when Misirkov’s manifesto of Macedonian nationalism was published—most of the Macedonian Slavic intelligentsia was using the standard Bulgarian language. The leaders and the activists of the famous IMRO—like the semi-legendary Goce Delčev/Gotse Delchev—did not hesitate in choosing the language to be used in their official documents and personal letters—this was again standard Bulgarian, sometimes with minor dialectal influences.⁷⁰ Given the numerous Bulgarian nationalists from the region, one can doubt the social importance of figures such as Pulevski or Misirkov: most of them were unknown to their contemporaries, and their heritage was literally excavated by scholars of the Yugoslav republic of Macedonia. Moreover, the literary and journalistic work of the fathers of Macedonian nationalism was often

⁶⁷ Lunt, “The Creation,” 22.

⁶⁸ Božidar Vidoeski, “Five Decades Since the Codification of the Macedonian Language,” *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 131 (1998): 23.

⁶⁹ Victor Friedman, “Macedonian: Codification and Lexicon,” in *Language Reform. History and Future. La Réforme des langues. Histoire et avenir. Sprachreform. Geschichte und Zukunft*, ed. István Fodor and Claude Hagège, vol. 3 (Hamburg: Buske Verlag, 1989), 300–304.

⁷⁰ Ivan Kochev, “Ezikăt na Dame Gruev (văz osnova na novootkritite mu pisma),” *Makedonski pregled* 4 (1998) and Ana Kocheva-Lefedzhieva, “Ezikăt na Gotse Delchev,” *Makedonski pregled* 4 (1998).

discarded during their lifetime by their compatriots. “Misirkov’s mess” (*Misirkovata kasha*) was condemned by the official review of the IMRO.⁷¹ The journalist Milan Grashev—born in the town of Prilep and speaker of the western-central Macedonian dialect—rejected the first attempt of standardization of his native idiom.

In fact, the aspiration for a language of education and of intellectual expression closer to the “mother tongue” is by no means culturally evident. The difference between standard Bulgarian and the Macedonian dialects can play a significant role only as a function of a more complex sociopolitical and sociocultural context, and by no means *a priori*. This difference may not even be so important compared to other national contexts. Even in 1959, the linguist Horace Lunt, author of the first Macedonian scholarly grammar, believed that for Macedonians to adopt Bulgarian as a literary language “would demand far fewer concessions on their part than have been made by Bavarians and Hamburgers, by Neapolitans and Piedmontese, and even, within Yugoslavia, by natives of Niš in the southeast and Senj in the northwest.”⁷²

However, if the “long” historical continuity of modern Macedonian as a literary language is doubtful, the Bulgarian idea that it appeared out of nowhere—as a result of Tito’s political fiat—is just as dubious. The era of Parteni Zografski and of Kuzman Šapkarev, and even that of Krste Misirkov, was perhaps not decisive for the genesis of the Macedonian standard language. But it is worth examining the cultural transformations of the next period: the interwar era.

If until the end of the Ottoman era (1912), the Slavic intelligentsia of Macedonia had a clearly (pro-)Bulgarian character, the partition of the region during the Balkan wars and World War I deeply reshaped categories of local identity. Most of Macedonia was under Greek and Serbian rule (the “Aegean” and the “Vardar” part, respectively). Aegean Macedonia was largely “cleansed” of its Slavic population, particularly due to the Greek-Bulgarian population exchanges during the 1920s. Vardar Macedonia saw the departure of a considerable part of its Bulgarian intelligentsia. But while in the Greek part of Macedonia, even speaking in Slavic Macedonian idiom was persecuted (during the dictatorship of Ioannis Metaxas), the situation in the Serbian part was somewhat better. The Yugoslav kingdom was tolerant towards the usage of what was officially considered to

⁷¹ *Makedonski pregled*, July 25, 1905.

⁷² Lunt, “The Creation,” 22.

be “south Serbian dialect.” Between the late 1920s and 1940, a number of young poets from Vardar Macedonia published their works in Macedonian language varieties.⁷³ Three playwrights (Vasil Iljoski, Risto Krle and Anton Panov) were also allowed to stage their plays in Macedonian.⁷⁴ Some of these authors—like Venko Markovski and Kole Nedelkovski—were active not only in Yugoslavia but also in Bulgaria, where they participated in a “Macedonian Literary Circle.”

This younger generation certainly differed from that of its parents: in general, it did *not* have a Bulgarian identity. In the specific social and cultural context of Yugoslavia, throughout the 1930s, most of the young people of the Vardar region developed a Macedonian self-identification free of the pro-Bulgarian leanings of the previous intelligentsia. And in this period, there were definitely conscious attempts to standardize Macedonian Slavic vernacular. The German linguist Christian Voss emphasizes the extent to which the poems of Kočo Racin, perhaps the most important of the young Vardar poets of the 1930s, resemble the norm codified after 1944.⁷⁵ The theater plays of Anton Panov and Risto Krle were not a mere “literature in dialect” either.⁷⁶

Moreover, this process developed during World War II, when members of the same generation joined the Yugoslav communist struggle against the Bulgarian occupation of Macedonia. Torsten Szobries has documented the progress of the linguistic normalization of Macedonian in the illegal partisan press during the war.⁷⁷ This trend did not involve all of geographic Macedonia: the Greek part was not involved in the formation of the Macedonian language, and the Pirin region, which was part of Bulgaria since 1912, was even less so.⁷⁸ It did not even concern all of the Slavic population of Vardar Macedonia. But the case was similar for the Bulgarian language before the creation of a nation-state in 1878–1879: it was

⁷³ See the collection of Blaže Ristovski, *Makedonskiot stih 1900–1944*, vol. 1–2 (Skopje: Misl, 1980).

⁷⁴ See Aleksandar Aleksiev, *Osnovopoložnici na makedonskata dramska literatura* (Skopje: Misl, 1972).

⁷⁵ Christian Voss, “Reviziya na ezika i istoriyata v Makedonija,” *Kultura*, March 1, 2002, vii. The German original: Christian Voss, “Sprach- und Geschichtsrevision in Makedonien,” *Osteuropa* 8 (2001).

⁷⁶ Christina Kramer, “Anton Panov’s Play *Pečalbari* and Its Role in the Standardization of Macedonian,” in *Of All the Slavs My Favorites: Indiana Slavic Studies* 12 (2001); Victor Friedman, “The Modern Macedonian,” 192–193.

⁷⁷ Torsten Szobries, *Sprachliche Aspekte des nation building in Mazedonien: Die Kommunistische Presse in Vardar-Mazedonien (1940–1943)* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1999).

⁷⁸ Even Macedonian nationalists from the Pirin region like the poet Nikola Vaptsarov were writing in standard Bulgarian.

definitely standardized only by its institutions and reached the majority of Bulgarians only thanks to the educational system, army and media of the new state. Both in the Bulgarian and in the Macedonian case, a political context was decisive for the “naturalization” of a phenomenon whose construction was much more complex than it would initially appear.

Symbolic Struggles and Political Interferences in the Creation of a Macedonian Alphabet

For Macedonian, the political moment that made possible the codification of orthography and lexicon⁷⁹ came with the proclamation, on August 2, 1944, of a Macedonian state in the framework of the new federative Yugoslavia. The Antifascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM)—the supreme semi-legislative, semi-executive institution of the new state—decreed the “popular Macedonian language” (*narodniot makedonski jazik*) as official (*služben jazik*). Indeed, in Vardar Macedonia, the “popular” idiom was far from disappearing, despite the imposition of standard Serbian (Serbo-Croatian) throughout the interwar period and the (re-)imposition of standard Bulgarian during the occupation in World War II. But it was a “popular” language only, without a codified norm.

The creation of the latter was assumed by the small-scale intelligentsia of the Vardar region, educated mostly in Serbian schools and also partially in Bulgarian ones (during the war). There were political figures who came from Bulgaria in order to contribute to the building of the new nation-state, such as Vasil Ivanovski, editor of the newly established *Nova Makedonija*, the first Macedonian daily. But they were not able to participate in the standardization of Macedonian as long as they expressed themselves in Bulgarian. In general, the same held true for the large Macedonian emigre community in Bulgaria, as well as for the population of the Pirin region. At the same time, Greek Macedonia was caught up in dramatic events that soon led to the Greek Civil War—apart from the fact that the region was partially “cleansed” of its Slavic population and massively colonized with Greek refugees from Asia Minor, Pontus and Thrace. Thus

⁷⁹ By “codification,” I am referring to the first of the stages of standardization of Macedonian after 1944–1945, analyzed by Victor Friedman: *codification/elaboration* (1945–1950), primary phase of pure *implementation/acceptance* (1950–1953) and *established implementation/expansion* (1954–). The first and the third phase allow for a number of subdivisions: Victor Friedman, “The Implementation of Standard Macedonian: Problems and Results,” *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 131 (1998): 32–33, 36–37.

the former Serbian Macedonia had to serve as the center of codification of the Macedonian Slavic vernacular. This fact predetermined two basic characteristics of the Macedonian standard: it re-emphasized the “central” position of the western-central dialect and enabled the considerable influence of the Serbo-Croatian language—a result of the specific composition of the local cadres.

As indicated above, Serbian “know-how” played a role in earlier attempts to write in and/or standardize Macedonian. The codification of the local vernacular required, by default, the use of phonetic orthography: the preservation of a more traditionalist script would not allow the adequate transliteration of certain phonetic particularities of Macedonian and/or to achieve the desired distance vis-à-vis standard Bulgarian. The latter had “historical” orthography—at least until the short-lived reform launched by the government of the Agrarian Union in 1921–1923 and the definitive simplification in 1945. In the meantime, the “phonetization” of the Cyrillic script inevitably meant proximity to the innovations of Vuk Karadžić.

That is why even the slightest attempts to introduce simplified and phonetic orthography were perceived in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Bulgaria as manifestations of a pro-Serbian stance. For instance, this was the case for the review *Loza* in 1892: it discarded a number of letters of the (by then existing) Bulgarian alphabet and used features of the Macedonian tongue. Despite accusations by the government press, its publishers—future activists of the IMRO and of other Macedonian-Bulgarian nationalistic organizations, Bulgarian intellectuals and politicians—were by no means pro-Serb and did not want to develop a separate Macedonian standard. But the partisans of a Macedonian language distinct from Bulgarian were emphasizing exactly those phonological traits and that part of the vocabulary of Macedonian that distinguish it from standard Bulgarian and often make it closer to Serbian. And they did not hesitate to use characters from Vuk’s alphabet, such as *j*, *h* and *h̑* (Gjorgjija Pulevski, Temko Popović)—or Serbo-Croatian loanwords such as *značaj*, *položaj*, *uslov* (“importance,” “situation,” “condition”) that are to be found in the works of Krste Misirkov.⁸⁰

The wish to highlight the Macedonian language’s differences vis-à-vis Bulgarian tended, more or less consciously, to “Serbianize” the Macedo-

⁸⁰ About the graphic systems of Gjorgjija Pulevski, Temko Popov(ić), Despot Badžović and Krste Misirkov—Trajko Stamatovski, *Borba za makedonski literaturni jazik* (Skopje: Mislà, 1986), 46–80.

nian Slavic vernacular. But it would not be correct to affirm unilaterally that the first Macedonian codifiers were promoting linguistic “Serbification.” They also introduced new characters, not existing in Vuk Karadžić’s script, obviously in order to prevent Macedonian from too closely resembling Serbian. Misirkov created at least five new letters, denoting the “soft” consonants *kj*, *gj*, *lj* and *nj* as well as an optional pronunciation of a vowel (*a/ă*). The appropriate symbol for the semi-vowel *j* was a special problem. The Bulgarian script uses a letter that does not exist in the Old Slavonic alphabet and is clearly a Russian innovation: *ѣ*. Vuk Karadžić’s alphabet replaced it with a distinctly Latin character: *j*. Just like Vuk’s opponents in Serbia, some of the first Macedonian nationalists, such as Krste Misirkov and Dimitrija Čupovski, opposed the use of *j*. Apparently, they saw it as a symbol foreign to Cyrillic script and preferred the traditional iota (*i*) of Old Slavonic instead.⁸¹

The writing of the semi-vowel and of the (dorso)palatal consonants *kj*, *gj*, *lj* and *nj* was also a dilemma for the interwar authors. Venko Markovski, for instance, could not decide among a number of options and sometimes combined them in the same text.⁸² Given the fact that the writers of his generation were publishing mostly in the framework of the Yugoslav kingdom, the use of Serbian letters was somewhat inevitable. But it was also a habit, stemming from these authors’ education in Yugoslav schools. This is certainly confirmed by the illegal press that developed through World War II, that is, under conditions of Bulgarian rule: it also used, partially or completely, Serbian orthography. There is another important reason for that: the Serbian phonetic script is easier than that of Bulgarian—especially the traditionalist Bulgarian orthography from that period. Communist partisans from the Vardar region were explicit on that point.⁸³ Last but not least, the Bulgarian alphabet was that of the occupier, the “enemy.” In this sense, the codification of Macedonian script in 1944–1945 merely endorsed a practice that already existed.⁸⁴

⁸¹ By the way, the semi-vowel also exists in the very name “Macedonia” (*Makedonija*) that Misirkov prefers to write as *Makedonuia* and not in the Serbian way—and later standard Macedonian: *Македонија*. However, certain Macedonian linguists imagine a whole tradition of the usage of *j* in Macedonia—Stamatovski, *Borba*, 65–66.

⁸² See, for instance, his poem *Kletnik* in Blaže Ristovski, *Portreti i procesi od makedonskata literaturna i nacionalna istorija*, vol. 2 (Skopje: Kultura, 1989), 435–436.

⁸³ See the memories of the partisan Jone Beleski: Stojan Risteski, *Prilozi za istorijata na makedonskiot jazik* (Ohrid: Macedonia Prima, 2000), 154–155.

⁸⁴ Stamatovski, *Borba*, 146–188.

The important task was entrusted to a “Commission for the Establishment of the Macedonian Language, Alphabet and Orthography” (*Komisija za ustanovuene na makedonskiot jazik, azbuka i pravopis*), which held its sessions between November 27 and December 4, 1944. Most of its members were teachers (often of Serbian and/or Bulgarian) with a secondary-school education. The exceptions were Gjorgji Šoptrajan(ov), who had a PhD in the French language; Mihail(o) Petruševski, who earned a PhD in classical philology; and Dare Džambaz, with an MA in pharmacy. The poet Venko Markovski and the young linguist Blaže Koneski had studied in university but had not graduated. Markovski clearly had more prestige than the others: he was a member of the ASNOM and of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Macedonian army (without military rank).⁸⁵

However, much more important in the long run was the figure of Koneski. An alumnus of the famous high school of Kragujevac in central Serbia, he began his university studies in Belgrade but, following the Bulgarian occupation in 1941, he continued them at Sofia University. In the autumn of 1944, Koneski participated in the first attempts to codify the Macedonian alphabet, initiated by the Yugoslav Macedonian partisans in the Muslim village of Gorno Vranovci. The philologist quickly became an important agitprop cadre and, at the age of 22, he was nominated to join the commission tasked with “establishing” the Macedonian alphabet and language.

As most of the other members of the commission were not professional linguists, their statements—recorded in stenographic transcripts—often seem extremely naive. Milka Balvanlieva-Đorđević and Venko Markovski even suggested that everyone in Macedonia should be allowed to write “the way he wants”—a suggestion that is obviously contrary to the very idea of language codification. Gjorgji Kiselinov called on the others to speed up the work “because we don’t have time to wait until one of our dialects develops into a literary language.” The participants did not always seem sure of their own level of competence and of the merit of their decisions. For instance, Krum Tošev (also known at the time as Krume Tošeski)

⁸⁵ Victor Friedman, “The First Philological Conference for the Establishment of the Macedonian Alphabet and the Macedonian Literary Language: Its Precedents and Consequences,” in *The Earliest Stage of Language Planning: The “First Congress Phenomenon,”* ed. Joshua Fishman (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1993), 166.

expressed his reservations: "I am afraid we are going to make a mistake and the people will laugh at us (*ta da ni se smejat lugeto*)."⁸⁶

The commission was nevertheless almost unanimous in its choice of a dialectal basis: this was the western-central dialect, which the participants called "central."⁸⁷ Concerning the characters, opinions varied. Milka Balvanlieva explicitly presented the political imperatives of the day: "It is the moment itself (*samoto vreme*) that obliges us to take the letters of the Serbo-Croatian Cyrillic alphabet, [given the fact] that in the newer science (*ponovata nauka*) the diphthongs [*sic!*] are avoided... With the Serbo-Croatian Cyrillic alphabet we will have a Yugoslav alphabet." Blaže Koneski—soon to become Macedonia's greatest linguist—also suggested the adoption of the Vuk Karadžić alphabet. He stressed that most Macedonians were educated with this orthography and insisted that any other choice would cast them back into illiteracy.⁸⁸

However, most of the members of the commission were in favor of the creation of a distinct Macedonian alphabet. This was the reason for long debates over the notation of certain consonants, such as the dorsopalatal *kj* and *gj*. Koneski again suggested the signs for their Serbian palatal equivalents (*h* and *h̑*), but the others obviously saw them as "too Serbian." The participants could not decide between digraphs (*kj*, *zj*, etc.), special characters with an accent (') or other diacritics (˘). The symbolic value of another, this time "traditional," character provoked debates: this was the ɹ marking schwa, or the so-called "dark vowel" (*temniot vokal*—ă). The problem was that the latter exists in Macedonian, but in the western-central dialect it is not systematically present. Moreover, it does not figure in Serbian Cyrillic, while it is used frequently in the Bulgarian script (especially in the script used before the reform of 1945).

The letter ɹ, as well as a number of other issues, divided Markovski and Koneski; the former was for and the latter against the "dark vowel" and its sign. Much later, in his memoirs on the work of the commission, Markovski cast this conflict in terms of national identity: he was defending the character ɹ, presumably because he was seeking to "save" the alphabet from complete "Serbification." Unfortunately, says Markovski, there were those such as Koneski with pro-Serbian views, people with a "dubious

⁸⁶ The minutes of the Commission were first published by Stojan Risteski, *Sozdavanjeto na sovremeniot makedonski literaturni jazik* (Skopje: Studentski zbor, 1988).

⁸⁷ Only Koneski used the specialized term "western A-dialect," which he most likely knew from his studies in Sofia. See Friedman, "The First Philological," 167–168.

⁸⁸ Risteski, *Prilozi*, 157.

past” who were “not specialists.”⁸⁹ However, the transcript of the debates does not show this kind of nationally based opposition: Markovski, the future pro-Bulgarian, even acquainted the other participants with the historical legacy of Krste Misirkov.⁹⁰ At the same time, another personal conflict was shaping up between Blaže Koneski and the teacher Gjorgji Kiselinov. Kiselinov had already developed a project on the Macedonian alphabet and grammar that was not taken into account by the commission—largely because of Koneski.⁹¹ This conflict was also interpreted in national terms. Kiselinov said later that he was marginalized by Koneski because they were of different family backgrounds: his family was pro-Bulgarian, while Koneski’s was pro-Serbian.⁹²

Thus the debates among participants in the commission for the codification of Macedonian language reflected, albeit indirectly, the ancient identity cleavages in Macedonia. Obviously, the personal ambitions of the codifiers resurrected and instrumentalized family and educational backgrounds that the new Macedonian state was trying to homogenize. But in 1944–1945, these cleavages did not revive the old rivalry between “Bulgarians” and “Serbs” in the Vardar region. They only produced competing articulations of Macedonian national identity, one of which was more loyal to Belgrade than the other.

The result of the commission’s work—the first version of Macedonian alphabet—was announced on December 28, 1944. The suggested graphic system was certainly original: it had four special characters (for *kj*, *gj*, *lj* and *nj*) formed by adding a small circle to a traditional Cyrillic letter (к, г, л and н respectively). This innovation imitated the form of certain letters of Vuk Karadžić—*ѣ* and *ѥ*—but it also made reference to the Glagolitic script of Cyril and Methodius. The alphabet likewise suggested a special character—*s*—for the consonant *dz*, which was “resurrected” from old Cyrillic: it had fallen out of use in Russian, Serbian and Bulgarian orthographies. A typical example of the “invention of tradition,” the alphabet of the commission for establishing a Macedonian language shows the codifiers’ intention to adopt an intermediate solution between the Serbian and

⁸⁹ Venko Markovski, *Krāvta voda ne stava* (Sofia: Trud, 2003), 253–259.

⁹⁰ Risteski, *Sozdavanjeto*, 245.

⁹¹ The Macedonian grammar prepared by Kiselinov uses only characters existing in the Bulgarian alphabet but is founded on the orthographical principles of the Serbian phonetic script: Stojan Risteski, *Edna neobjavena makedonska gramatika od 1944 od Gjorgji Kiselinov* (Ohrid: Nezavisni izdanija, 1991).

⁹² Stojan Risteski, *Tabu temata: Kiselinov—Koneski* (Ohrid: Macedonia Prima, 1994), 99.

the Bulgarian one. From the Serbian script they took the letter *j* as well as the (more traditional) letter *џ* (denoting *dž*). At the same time, the long-debated *з* was preserved, at the risk of giving the new alphabet a “Bulgarian” feel. This choice went against the wishes of Blaže Koneski who, in the meantime, left the commission. Apparently, he considered the other participants to be “linguistically naive” and insufficiently prepared.⁹³

Koneski’s departure proved to be a reasonable choice: for unspecified reasons, the suggested alphabet was never implemented. The question of Macedonian orthography was given utmost political importance, and the “right” solution was not long in coming: in March 1945 a newly formed commission accepted the alphabet of Vuk Karadžić.⁹⁴ One innovation—the letter *s*—distinguished the Macedonian alphabet from the Serbian. Again, this solution was not definitive. The next month, the agitprop section of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia invited to Belgrade the cadres believed to be the most competent in the field of the Macedonian language (once more, Blaže Koneski and Venko Markovski, as well as Veselinka Malinska). According to the memoirs of one of the leaders of the new Yugoslavia—Milovan Djilas—it was the proposals of the young philologist Koneski that were finally accepted.⁹⁵

There are a number of differences between the choice of letters made by the first commission and the definitive one. The dorsopalatal *kj* and *gj* were denoted by new special letters: *ќ* and *ѓ* (less sophisticated than those suggested initially). But the *lj* and the *nj* were indicated by the Serbian characters *љ* and *њ*. The letter for *dz* (*s*) was preserved, but the representation of the “dark vowel” was, according to Victor Friedman, “conspicuous by its absence.”⁹⁶ Although most of the codifiers of the new alphabet wished to keep the *з*, it disappeared for good from the Macedonian graphic system. The use of the schwa is certainly limited in the western-central dialect that serves as a basis of the standard language. But one can ask why, in this case, *dz* or *dž* received special letters.⁹⁷ The pretext for

⁹³ Friedman, “The First Philological,” 176.

⁹⁴ Risteski, *Sozdavanjeto*, 167–176.

⁹⁵ Risteski, *Sozdavanjeto*, 185–190; Risteski, *Prilozi*, 147.

⁹⁶ Friedman, “The Sociolinguistics,” 41.

⁹⁷ The *s* is employed in words such as *свезда* (“star”), *суд* (“wall”), *сеп* (“monster”) and their derivatives. The *џ* is used most often in Turkish loanwords that are today often archaic or part of a specialized historiographical vocabulary (such as *аџија*—“pilgrim” or *кујунџија*—“jeweler”). Today it also figures in English loanwords and in the transliteration of Anglo-American names (such as *менаџер*—“manager” or *Џорџ*—“George”). In Serbian this character is used also in “purely Serbian” words where the old *џ* has evolved into a voiced consonant (*dž*): for instance, *уџбеник*—“textbook” (while in Macedonian

rejecting letters from the Bulgarian (and the Russian) alphabet that were nonexistent in Serbian, such as *ю* (*yu*), *я* (*ya*) or *џ* (*sht*), was the wish to avoid denoting “diphthongs.” But this was not the case for the dark vowel *ǎ*. Lacking an adequate letter, Macedonians today use the apostrophe (') to denote it.⁹⁸

On May 3, 1945, the alphabet project was presented to the Ministry of Education and approved by it. At the beginning of June, the ministry also approved a short orthographical and morphological guide. Although they did not embrace the Serbian script, the codifiers of Macedonian produced not only an alphabet but also a phonetic orthography that was very close to that of Serbian. For instance, the way certain important terms—such as “Macedonia,” “Serbia” and “Yugoslavia”—are written is practically identical in Macedonian and Serbian Cyrillic (*Македонија*, *Србија*, *Југославија*) yet clearly different in Bulgarian (*Македония*, *Сърбия*, *Югославия*). The new alphabet contains three letters that do not exist in Serbian (although two of them have direct parallels there). But after the elimination of *џ*, there is not a single Macedonian character that is also used in Bulgarian but not in Serbian.

Not surprisingly, a number of Macedonian intellectuals had reservations concerning the newly established orthography. This was true not only of Venko Markovski and of Koneski's other rivals in the language commissions, but also of *Nova Makedonija*'s editor Vasil Ivanovski and of the old Macedonian activists Pavel Šatev and Panko Brašnarov, who held high official positions. They considered the new Macedonian script and norm too “Serbified” and distant from the “language” and the “traditions”

it is *учебник*, just as in Bulgarian). One can also question the value of the special sign for palatal *lj*—*љ*. In Serbian it is used more frequently: in particular, in cases comprising epenthetic *l*—the result of iotacism of *b*, *p*, *m* and *v* (e.g., *земља*—*zemlja*—“land,” “earth”). But in Macedonian, similarly to Bulgarian, there is no such iotacism of *b*, *p*, *m* or *v*: one says *zemya* in both cases (written as *земја* in Macedonian and *земя* in Bulgarian). In some cases, the usage of *lj* in the western-central dialect and in modern Macedonian is even more limited than in Bulgarian. Cf. Macedonian *nedela* (“Sunday” and “week”) and *Bitola*—Bulgarian *nedelya* and *Bitolya*—Serbian *nedelja* and *Bitolj*. The value of *љ* in Macedonian is further put into question by the fact that many words that contain it in Serbian are written with the combination *l+j* (*lj*) in Macedonian: for instance, *воља* (“will”) and the female name *Билјана* (in Serbian *воља* and *Биљана*). This choice of letters indicates to what extent the codifiers of the Macedonian alphabet were following graphical habits from their Serbian education: the first language commission agreed on the need of a special sign for *lj*, for instance.

⁹⁸ As a result, the writing of texts in Macedonian linguistic varieties different from the contemporary standard language entails the excessive use of apostrophes. This is the case for the classical poem of Konstantin Miladinov, *T'ga za jug*, often cited in Macedonia.

of Macedonia.⁹⁹ Later, the Bulgarian polemist would concur. But the language planning within the Yugoslav republic was certainly more complex than the impression of unequivocal “Serbification” created by the (pro-) Bulgarian writings.

*The Codification of the Lexicon and the Definitive Elaboration of
Contemporary Macedonian*

The pro-Serbian trend in the codification of standard Macedonian was obvious in a number of fields. It also appeared early on in the choice of specialized vocabulary. For instance, the grammatical terminology coined by the philologist Vojislav Ilić strictly followed the Serbian model.¹⁰⁰ “Serbification” also shaped the first *Grammar of the Macedonian Language*, published in 1946 by Krume Kepeski.¹⁰¹ It is true that Kepeski prepared his grammar in haste, at the educational authorities’ insistence. But the rush does not explain why one can find “declensions” in this grammar of Macedonian substantives in seven cases, as in Serbo-Croatian. Because of the absence of real flexions, Kepeski had to present non-declined nouns accompanied by prepositions intended to give the idea of the respective case in Serbian.

This abrupt imitation of Serbo-Croatian models was, however, gradually finessed and “corrected.” For instance, a salient feature of the northern Macedonian dialects that places them closer to Serbo-Croatian—the verbal suffix *-ue*—was accepted by the language commissions but was later replaced by the suffix *-uva* (typical of the western-central dialect and close to standard Bulgarian). Victor Friedman also identifies grammatical features adopted from dialects other than the western-central—in particular

⁹⁹ See their complaints addressed to the Bulgarian communist authorities: *BKP, Kominternăt i Makedonskiyat vāpros, 1919–1946*, vol. 2 (Sofia: GUA pri MS, 1999), 1245–1248, 1275–1277; TsDA (Central State Archive—Sofia), F. 214B, OP. 1, A.E. 517, L. 3–11.

¹⁰⁰ For “substantive”—*imenka* (from Serbian *imenica*, in Bulgarian—*sāshtestvitelno ime*), “adjective”—*pridavka* (Serbian—*pridev*, Bulgarian—*prilagatelno ime*), “personal pronoun”—*lična zamenka* (Serbian—*lična zamenica*, Bulgarian—*lično mestoimenie*), “singular”—*ednina* (Serbian—*jednina*, Bulgarian—*edinstveno chislo*), “plural”—*množina* (Serbian—*množina*, Bulgarian—*mnozhestveno chislo*), “subordinate clauses”—*zavisni rečenici* (Serbian—*zavisne rečenice*, Bulgarian—*podchineni izrecheniya*), etc. About the elaboration of the linguistic terminology: Vojislav Ilić, “Počeci stvaranja i angažovanja makedonske lingvističke terminologije,” *Zbornik za filologiju i lingvistiku* XI (Novi Sad: Matica srpska, 1968), cited by Risteski, *Prilozi*, 102–118.

¹⁰¹ Krume Kepeski, *Gramatika na makedonskiot jazik* (Skopje: Državno knigoizdatelstvo, 1946).

from the eastern Macedonian varieties. The last fact casts doubt on the idea that these varieties were completely excluded from the process of codification because of their proximity to Bulgarian.¹⁰² And simultaneously with the direct borrowings from Serbian, the Macedonian linguists began to coin new words. It was once more Blaže Koneski who formulated the basic directives for the construction of a Macedonian vocabulary.¹⁰³

On the one hand, Koneski introduced certain principles that placed the evolving lexicon closer to Serbian and distinguished it from Bulgarian. The Bulgarian and Russian-like suffix *-nie*, used in substantives derived from imperfective verbs, was banished by Koneski as “archaic” and was replaced by *-nje*, also typical of Serbian.¹⁰⁴ The use of the suffix *-stvo* was increased, at the expense of the “archaisms” using *-ie*, again characterizing Bulgarian.¹⁰⁵

On the other hand, Koneski invented new words using Serbian models. For instance, he came up with *prašanje* (“question”—from the verb *praša*, “to ask”); the Serbian equivalent is *pitanje* (from the corresponding verb *pitati*), while the Bulgarian is *văpros* (an adaptation of the Russian substantive *vopros*). Koneski sometimes only “Macedonized” commonly used Bulgarian words, such as *vostanie* (“uprising”), which is *văstanie* in Bulgarian and *ustanak* in Serbo-Croatian. As this example shows, the “archaic” suffix *-nie* was, however, conserved for substantives formed on the basis of perfective verbs: Koneski retained the words *vnimanie* (“attention”) and *vljanie* (“influence”), identical in Bulgarian, instead of borrowing their Serbian counterparts *pažnja* and *uticaj*.

The young linguist likewise worked to create an original lexicon. He particularly favored the suffix *-ba* for the construction of “purely Macedonian” words like *sostojba* (“state of affairs,” “condition”—as opposed to the Bulgarian *săstoyanie* and the Serbian *stanje*) and *položba* (“situation”—as opposed to *polozhenie* in Bulgarian and *položaj* in Serbian).¹⁰⁶ There are also curious examples: Koneski developed the substantive *nastan*, found

¹⁰² Friedman, “The Modern Macedonian,” 196, 201.

¹⁰³ “Beleški za rečnikot na našiot jazik,” a text from 1946 (Koneski, *Za makedonskiot literaturnen*, 18–39).

¹⁰⁴ The suffix *-nje* is certainly present in the Macedonian dialects, but in the western-central zone there was the version *-nje*, that is, a form with an anticipated iotacism. One can find this suffix in the works of Misirkov—for instance, *barain’é* (“claim,” “demand,” “requirement”) instead of *baranje* in the contemporary Macedonian.

¹⁰⁵ For other examples: Konstantin Popov, *Iz istoriyata na bălgarskiya knizhoven ezik* (Sofia: BAN, 1985), 108–133.

¹⁰⁶ Koneski, *Za makedonskiot literaturnen*, 9.

in a folk song recorded in the nineteenth century by the brothers Miladinov, into a fully legitimate word for “event.” It was supposed to replace forms such as *sobitie* and *dogagaj*, Macedonian adaptations of the Bulgarian and the Serbian term (*sābitie* and *dogadaj*, respectively).

Of course, these innovations were not adopted by all Macedonians immediately. Koneski himself described the initial reaction towards newly coined words such as *nastan* and *prašanje*: they were perceived as “funny.”¹⁰⁷ Other observers noted that certain circles were dissatisfied with the new standard language, in some cases due to attachment to a native dialect with its own system of accents. But there were also manifestations of Serbian or Bulgarian linguistic habits,¹⁰⁸ such as the aforementioned pro-Bulgarian cases of Ivanovski, Šatev and Brašnarov. Blaže Koneski stubbornly resisted all claims against the newfangled national language. When certain voices in Yugoslav Macedonia insisted on the need to draw the norm closer to the “Macedonian dialects” of the Pirin region in Bulgaria, the young linguist perceived the tacit pro-Bulgarian attitude behind such requests and firmly rejected them.

However, during Yugoslavia’s short Stalinist period, there was an indirect danger of the “Bulgarization” of Macedonian—through *Russian* influence. As some of the sample words and letters given here suggest, modern standard Bulgarian is heavily Russified. During its period of codification in the nineteenth century, Bulgarian intellectuals freely borrowed abstract concepts and specialized terms and expressions from the language of the big Slavic brother. The Russian model was so important in the modeling of the new standard language that the Bulgarian linguist Benyu Tsonev later stressed that “our language was formed through Russian” (*nashiyat ezik se e obrazuval chrez ruskiya*).¹⁰⁹ Macedonian-Bulgarian intellectuals also participated in this process: for instance, Rajko Žinzifov promoted dozens of Russian words in modern Bulgarian.¹¹⁰

More important here is that, in general, this vocabulary does not exist in Serbian. If nineteenth-century Bulgarian authors were trying to “Slavify” their language through Russian know-how, Vuk Karadžić adopted the opposite language-planning strategy. He sought to rid modern Serbian

¹⁰⁷ Koneski, *Za makedonskiot literaturni*, 23–24.

¹⁰⁸ Lunt, “The Creation,” 23.

¹⁰⁹ Tsonev, *Istoriya*, vol. 2, 344.

¹¹⁰ Among these are the aforementioned words finishing in *-nie* or *-ie*, such as *vni-manie*, *vliyanie* and *polozhenie*. See Stoyan Zharev, *Ezikāt na Rayko Zhinzifov* (Sofia: BAN, 1979).

of the heavy Russian and/or Church Slavonic¹¹¹ ballast of the so-called Slavo-Serbian language (*slavenoserbski jezik*) that previously dominated in Serbia. Vuk preferred to take words from the “popular” tongue—including a number of Turkish loanwords that were systematically eliminated by Bulgarian codifiers—or from Croatian and/or Western Slavic languages. As a result, both Russians and Bulgarians use, for instance, *nachalo* for “beginning” and *pravitel'(')stvo* for “government.” At the same time, the Serbs say *početak* and *vlada*, respectively (the same words are used in Croatian, and *počátek* and *vláda* are used in Czech).

Hence, the introduction of Russian abstract and specialized vocabulary in Macedonian would make it identical in many respects with Bulgarian. For that reason, the Macedonian codifiers intentionally opted for the Serbian model:¹¹² *početok* and *vlada* became the standard Macedonian terms for “beginning” and “government.” Koneski explicitly rejected the Russian-inspired codification of the lexicon.¹¹³ From this point of view, the rupture between Tito’s Yugoslavia and the Stalinist Cominform in 1948 was welcome: Russian/Bulgarian influence was finally neutralized.

Simultaneously, as if to corroborate Cominformist accusations against Yugoslavia as a “lackey of Anglo-American imperialism,” the Macedonian philologists found a remarkable ally: the American linguist Horace Lunt. As assistant professor of Slavic languages at Harvard University, Lunt was sent to Yugoslavia in 1950 in order to re-establish exchanges between his institution and Yugoslav academia. During his stay, Lunt met Blaže Koneski and other scholars from the Macedonian republic who acquainted him with the recently established Macedonian standard language. Horace Lunt was allowed by the authorities to conduct fieldwork in Macedonia and even received Yugoslav financing.¹¹⁴ The Harvard Slavist unquestionably made a major contribution to the new linguistic norm. In 1951 he authored a seminal article on the morphology of the Macedonian verb.

¹¹¹ Church Slavonic (*tserkovnoslavyanskij*) is a late Russian version of the Old Slavonic of Cyril and Methodius and is currently used not only in the Russian Church but also in the Bulgarian, the Serbian and the Macedonian Orthodox Church.

¹¹² Sometimes despite the official directives from the Ministry of Education insisting on using Russian patterns: Ilić disregarded such instructions in his elaboration of the grammatical terminology (Risteski, *Prilozi*, 106).

¹¹³ Blaže Koneski, *Gramatika na makedonskiot jazik* (Skopje: Kultura, 1967), 55–56.

¹¹⁴ Victor Friedman, “Horace G. Lunt and the Beginning of Macedonian Studies in the United States,” in *Prilozi: Oddelenie za lingvistika i literaturna nauka—Makedonska akademija na naukite i umetnostite*, 1–2 (1998): 115–119. Victor Friedman, “Blaže Koneski vo severnoamerikanskata lingvistika,” in *Pridonesot na Blaže Koneski za makedonskata kultura* (Skopje: Univerzitet Sv. Kiril i Metodij, 1999), 29.

The next year, he published the first scholarly grammar of the Macedonian language.¹¹⁵

Lunt's hosts were also busy: in 1952 Blaže Koneski issued the first part (Phonology) of his own *Grammar of the Macedonian Language*.¹¹⁶ The next year saw the establishment of the Krste Misirkov Institute for Macedonian Language (*Institut za makedonski jazik "Krste Misirkov"*). The institute published the scholarly review *Makedonski jazik*, which, in the following decade, endorsed the standard version of many orthographical, phonetic and morphological features that initially varied greatly.¹¹⁷ The lack of an academic dictionary of Macedonian was addressed only in 1961, when Blaže Koneski, Todor Dimitrovski, Blagoja Korubin and Trajko Stamatovski published the first volume of the *Dictionary of the Macedonian Literary Language with Serbo-Croatian Translations*.¹¹⁸

In 1967 Blaže Koneski became the first president of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts (*Makedonska akademija na naukite i umetnostite* or MANU). Over time he earned the reputation of "father of the Macedonian literary language"—a norm that clearly claimed both literary tradition and dialectal basis that Bulgarian scholars regarded as "their own." Koneski was also the author of the *History of the Macedonian Language*, in which the Macedonian national character of this tradition was asserted.¹¹⁹ As for Macedonian dialectology, it also had a father: Božidar (Božo) Vidoeski, editor of *Makedonski jazik* and holder of important positions at the Institute for Macedonian Language as well as at the Skopje University.¹²⁰

Koneski and Vidoeski were also active in international Slavist networks and created real "Macedonist schools" in countries like Poland: the Polish linguist Zuzana Topolińska became one of the most important

¹¹⁵ Horace Lunt, *A Grammar of the Macedonian Literary Language* (Skopje: Državno knigoizdatelstvo, 1952).

¹¹⁶ Blaže Koneski, *Gramatika na makedonskiot literaturni jazik* (Skopje: Državno knigoizdatelstvo, 1952). The second part (Morphology) was published two years later.

¹¹⁷ See the analysis of Friedman, "The Sociolinguistics," 42–44. For the larger audience, it was instead the daily journal *Nova Makedonija* that served as a principal means of implementation of the Macedonian standard norm.

¹¹⁸ Blaže Koneski et al., *Rečnik na makedonskiot jazik so srpskohrvatski tolkuvanja* (Skopje: Institut za makedonski jazik, 1961). The other two volumes appeared in 1965 and 1966.

¹¹⁹ Koneski, *Istorija na makedonskiot jazik*.

¹²⁰ Božidar Vidoeski, "Osnovni dijalektni grupi vo Makedonija," *Makedonski jazik* 11–12 (1960–1961); Vidoeski, "Makedonskite dijalekti vo svetlinata na lingvističkata geografija," *Makedonski jazik* 13–14 (1962–1963); Vidoeski, *Dijalektite na makedonskiot jazik*, vol. 1–3 (Skopje: MANU, 1998).

Macedonian philologists. Moreover, thanks to Horace Lunt, Macedonian studies developed at U.S. universities. A number of North American linguists recognized the existence of a separate Macedonian language and literary tradition, including Zbigniew Gołąb (Chicago), Victor Friedman (Chicago) and Christina Kramer (Toronto).

The Macedonian linguists' global success frustrated their Bulgarian colleagues. They regarded, for instance, Koneski's *History of the Macedonian Language* as a plagiarism and "falsification" of the *Historical Grammar of the Bulgarian Language* written by Kiril Mirchev, a Bulgarian scholar originating from Bitola.¹²¹ Indeed, Koneski did not hesitate to use the corpus of texts analyzed by Mirchev and to claim they belonged to a language different from Bulgarian. The philologists from Sofia also observed that Koneski ignored the parallels between Macedonian and Bulgarian. The specialist from Skopje preferred to demonstrate the specificity of Macedonian compared to the other Balkan languages (Albanian, Modern Greek and Romanian/Aromanian). In this way, he supposedly tended to create the impression that the proximity of Bulgarian to Macedonian was limited to very general traits typical of all the Balkan idioms. The geographical location of the "Macedonian dialects" claimed by Božo Vidoeski also provoked resentment in Bulgarian academic circles. These noted that the dialectal area presented by Vidoeski entered deep into Bulgarian (as well as Greek and Albanian) territory but respected the internal Yugoslav boundary between Macedonia and Serbia.

In fact, these debates deserve a more detailed presentation.

Language Polemics between Bulgarian and Macedonian Scholars during Communism

The arrival in power of the communist-dominated Fatherland Front in September 1944 had a direct impact on the academic milieu in Bulgaria as well as on the conventional interpretations accepted by local scholars. Between 1944 and 1948, the ruling Communist Party promoted the creation of a sizable South Slavic federation between Bulgaria and Tito's Yugoslavia, and one of its goals was the "unification" of the divided parts of geographic Macedonia. In line with Sofia's new official recognition of a Macedonian nation in the Yugoslav republic and of a Macedonian

¹²¹ Kiril Mirchev, *Istoricheska gramatika na bălgarskiya ezik* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1958).

population in Bulgaria's own Pirin region, Bulgarian linguists were supposed to subscribe to the new, politically correct opinion that there was a historical difference between Bulgarian and Macedonian.

Certain scholars reacted accordingly. In 1946 Ivan Lekov published a positive review of Krume Kepeski's grammar.¹²² This was the moment when education in the Macedonian language—a language still in the process of codification—was introduced even inside Bulgaria, in the schools of the Pirin region. The local journal *Pirinsko delo* had a page in Macedonian where Koneski himself explained to the "Macedonians of Bulgaria" the principles of the new norm.

Nevertheless, the Bulgarian linguists were certainly reluctant to give up their traditional views. Lekov's article, which was very short, emphasized that the Macedonian Slavic dialects were considered "Macedono-Bulgarian" by foreign Slavists as well. When Kiril Mirchev was invited to Skopje—as a "Macedonian"—at the end of 1944 to contribute to the codification of the new standard language, he turned down the proposal.¹²³ This was more than understandable: before the communist regime came to power, the Bitola native severely criticized Serbian claims concerning the dialects of the "Macedonian Bulgarians."¹²⁴ His Serbian colleagues likewise had to face the new political reality: Aleksandar Belić, who had worked extensively on what he labeled Old štokavian "Serbo-Macedonian,"¹²⁵ had to give up his claims on the language spoken in the southernmost republic of the new federative and "people's" Yugoslavia.

Thus the recognition of a Macedonian language by the end of the war almost succeeded in ending decades of contention over the Slavic vernaculars of Macedonia. I say "almost," because the conflict between Belgrade and the Cominform (including the Bulgarian Communist Party) curbed Bulgarian tolerance towards the manner of standardization of the Macedonian language. As early as 1948, two major forums of the Central Committee of the BCP (the Sixteenth Plenum and the Fifth Congress) condemned the "Serbified language" of Skopje—the same language that, in the meantime, the communist authorities had imposed themselves in the Pirin region. Blaže Koneski reacted immediately to the Bulgarian

¹²² Ivan Lekov, "Krume Kepeski, *Makedonska gramatika*," *Ezik i literatura* 2 (1946): 47–48.

¹²³ Risteski, *Prilozi*, 179.

¹²⁴ Kiril Mirchev, *Srăbskata nauka za ezika na makedonskite bălgari* (Sofia: MNP, 1943).

¹²⁵ Aleksandar Belić, *Galički dijalekat* (Belgrade: Srpska kraljevska akademija, 1935).

accusations, seeing them as an attack on Macedonians' national identity itself.¹²⁶

Although they stopped education in Macedonian inside the country, at least initially, the Bulgarian Communist Party and state continued to recognize a distinct Macedonian identity. They merely criticized Yugoslavia's "Tito-fascist" rulers as well as the "Serbified" standard norm of the Macedonian republic. This trend found expression in a paper entitled *On the Macedonian Literary Language*, authored by Kiril Mirchev in 1952.¹²⁷ From a conceptual point of view, Mirchev took advantage of a certain mutation in Soviet linguistics announced by Stalin himself. In his work *Marxism and Problems of Linguistics* (1950), the "Father of Nations" condemned the (hitherto official) theory of Nicholas Marr according to which class differences were more important than ethnic differences in the languages of humanity. This criticism restored credibility to traditional nationalist approaches.

Mirchev adopted Stalin's idea that dialects, marginalized by the codification of a certain national language, could give birth to a different language, in appropriate social and economic conditions. This formula allowed the specialist from Sofia to re-appropriate the Macedonian into the "Bulgarian language area" without rejecting the *current* existence of a separate linguistic norm. Kiril Mirchev tried to show that Macedonian was a "branch" of Bulgarian, *a posteriori* developed into literary language. He also emphasized that the Macedonian national consciousness was a "late product." Nevertheless, the Bulgarian linguist did not deny the "need" for a specific Macedonian norm: he only condemned the "Serbification" of its lexicon and orthography—a *locus communis* of all the Bulgarian critiques to this day. In any case, this was enough to outrage Blaže Koneski, the codifier of the "Serbified" norm, who responded in a special essay.¹²⁸

Hence the political context after the Tito-Stalin split restructured the traditional polemics concerning the Macedonian Slavic vernacular. While the Serbian scholars remained silent, the controversy continued between their Bulgarian and—this time—Macedonian colleagues. Inside Sofia's academic community, the context was slowly evolving towards a reassertion of theses from the pre-communist period. This evolution is visible in

¹²⁶ Blaže Koneski, *Po povod najnoviot napad na našiot jazik* (Skopje: Zemski odbor na NR Makedonija, 1948).

¹²⁷ Kiril Mirchev, *Za makedonskiya literaturnen ezik* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1952).

¹²⁸ Blaže Koneski, "Profesorot Mirčev protiv makedonskiot pravopis," *Makedonski jazik* (1952).

the various editions of Stoyko Stoykov's *Bulgarian Dialectology*. The first edition, published in 1949, treated the Macedonian dialects as distinct from Bulgarian and merely mentioned the "particularly strong connection" between them and the Bulgarian dialects.¹²⁹ The second edition, from 1956, emphasized more than twelve centuries of existence of the Macedonian dialects "within" the Bulgarian "nationality" and "nation"—before their standardization as a different norm.¹³⁰ The next edition of Stoykov's academic dialectology (1962) clearly subsumed the Macedonian dialects into the Bulgarian language. However, the author graciously bestowed on the Macedonians the right to develop their own nation and national language.¹³¹ At that moment, the specialists from the Institute of Bulgarian Language (in the framework of the Academy of Sciences) were using the notion of "Bulgaro-Macedonian dialects," still implying a certain compromise with the existence of a parallel language.

Soon this generosity was abandoned. From the early 1960s on, the party and state leadership of Todor Zhivkov adopted a much less accommodating policy on the Macedonian question. Throughout the following decade, this policy resurrected traditional formulas of Bulgarian nationalism. The field of historiography revived the conventional narrative of Macedonia as a Bulgarian land. The same was true of the linguistic field. As early as March 1963, in a plenum of the supreme party leadership, Zhivkov declared that the Macedonian language was nothing more than an "idiom belonging to our western idioms, a dialect."¹³² The same idea apparently led Georgi Dzhagarov, director of the Union of Bulgarian Writers and personal advisor of Zhivkov, to refuse to sign an agreement in 1966 with Macedonian writers composed in their language as well. The scandal provoked by Dzhagarov proved to be only the first in a long series of "linguistic debates" between Bulgarian and Macedonian officials. In fact, apart from certain temporary exceptions in the early 1970s, from that moment on, Bulgarian state representatives systematically refused to sign bilateral contracts and any documents also composed in Macedonian.

In 1968 Bulgarian dialectology was again rewritten: the new edition of Stoykov's monograph no longer supposed that the Macedonian dialects

¹²⁹ Stoykov also accused linguists from the "capitalist" period, such as Stefan Mladenov, of "chauvinism" because they treated Macedonian and southeastern Serbian dialects as Bulgarian: Stoyko Stoykov, *Bălgarska dialektologiya* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1949), 36–37.

¹³⁰ Stoyko Stoykov, *Bălgarska dialektologiya* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1956), 38.

¹³¹ Stoyko Stoykov, *Bălgarska dialektologiya* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1962), 49–50.

¹³² *BKP, Kominternăt i Makedonskiyat văpros*, 1286–1287.

could develop into a distinct language.¹³³ Meanwhile, the tension between Sofia and Belgrade became almost explosive. As Bulgaria was among the Warsaw Pact countries that suppressed the Prague Spring, Yugoslavia feared a similar invasion of (pro-)Soviet forces from its eastern neighbor. Thus 1968 was marked by constant disagreement between the Bulgarian and Yugoslav (Macedonian) press as well as by extreme tension among the diplomats of the two countries. Not surprisingly, this also affected linguistic production.

In the same year the *Short Comparative Historical and Typological Grammar of the Slavic Languages* was published by Ivan Lekov, head of the chair of Slavic linguistics at Sofia University and the section of the same name at the Institute for Bulgarian Language.¹³⁴ Although this monograph was of unprecedented importance to Bulgarian linguistics, the book did not reach its intended audience: on the very day it appeared in bookstores, it was confiscated and withdrawn from circulation. The reason: in his comparison of the phonological, morphological and other traits of Slavic languages in their historical development, Lekov included the Macedonian language.

In fact, his expressions are quite cautious. Lekov refers to the “new Macedonian language” and “the newfangled Macedonian literary language.” He presents the typical historical evolutions of “Bulgarian with Macedonian” and uses the term “Bulgaro-Macedonian” for the vernacular varieties. Although nothing in the text implies a separate historical continuity of Macedonian, the timid recognition of the contemporary standard norm was obviously enough. The Presidium of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences severely criticized Lekov for “unpatriotic behavior.” Later, he was excluded from the leadership of the International Committee of Slavists, where he held the position of vice-president: this was done on the initiative of the Bulgarian delegation.¹³⁵

Lekov was certainly not a dissident: his prudent formulas about Macedonia’s Slavic language would have been completely acceptable in the preceding years, when the monograph was being prepared. But in 1968—a time of serious political tension between Sofia and Belgrade—Lekov’s writing was already “out of date.” This was demonstrated during the Congress

¹³³ Stoyko Stoykov, *Bălgarska dialektologiya* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1968), 49.

¹³⁴ Ivan Lekov, *Kratka sravnitelno-istoricheska i tipologicheska gramatika na slavyanskite ezitsi* (Sofia: BAN, 1968).

¹³⁵ *Obshtnost i mnogoobrazie na slavyanskite ezitsi. Sbornik v chest na prof. Ivan Lekov* (Sofia: Akademichno slavistichno druzhestvo, 1997), 7, 10–14, 31–32, 35–36.

of Slavic Studies that year, held in rebellious Prague: it became a battlefield between Bulgarian and Yugoslav Macedonian scholars. During the dispute, Maksim Mladenov, dialectologist from the Institute of Bulgarian Language, rejected any concept of a “Bulgaro-Macedonian” dialectal continuum, saying that the language community of Macedonia and Bulgaria could only be Bulgarian.¹³⁶

The Bulgarian scholars were particularly critical of the dialectological maps of Božidar Vidoeski, which show the isoglosses of the Macedonian language covering the Pirin region as well.¹³⁷ Sofia’s response was swift. Following a resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the BCP from 1969 (concerning the development of Bulgarian studies abroad),¹³⁸ the Institute of Bulgarian Language decided not to respect political boundaries when depicting dialects in the forthcoming volume of the *Bulgarian Dialectological Atlas*. As a result, the territories of geographic Macedonia and of southeastern Serbia entered the publication. Another atlas of the “Bulgarian dialects” in Aegean (Greek) Macedonia appeared in 1972.¹³⁹ Thus, in the 1970s, the dialectologists significantly expanded the “Bulgarian linguistic area.” If Stoykov’s 1968 dialectology remained contained within the state borders of Bulgaria, this was not the case for the studies published a decade later.¹⁴⁰

The “ethnic belonging” of dialects was, however, one of the aspects of the quarrel between Bulgarian and Yugoslav Macedonian linguists. The second one, directly related to the first, was the identity of the historical past of the Slavic vernacular in Macedonia. As already mentioned, in the traditionalist philological field, the linguistic problems are necessarily intertwined with those of national history. That is why Yugoslav Macedonian scholars often expressed their opinion on historical questions: this was the case with Koneski. In Bulgaria nationally minded cooperation between linguists and historians was largely inspired and encouraged by the party leadership.

¹³⁶ NA-BAN (Scholarly archive of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), F. 88, OP. 3, A.E. 19, L. 49.

¹³⁷ Yordan Ivanov, “Osnovni dijalektni grupi vo Makedonija’ i ‘Makedonskite dijalekti vo svetlinata na lingvističkata geografija’ ot B. Vidoeski,” *Bălgarski ezik* 4–5 (1969): 467–471. See Rossitza Guentcheva, “Vidimi mitove: bălgarskite ezikovi karti prez vtorata polovina na 20 vek,” *Kritika i humanizăm* 3 (2001), 105.

¹³⁸ TsPA (the former Central Archive of the Bulgarian Communist Party), F. 1, OP. 35, A.E. 138.

¹³⁹ Guentcheva, “Vidimi mitove,” 95–97.

¹⁴⁰ Yordan Ivanov, *Bălgarska dialektologiya* (Plovdiv: PU Paisiy Hilendarski, 1978).

During the March 1963 plenum, Todor Zhivkov indicated the link between the linguistic and historical fields. He stressed Sofia's traditional point of view, according to which it was the "Bulgarian" idiom of Macedonia that the brothers Cyril and Methodius used in their translations into Old Slavonic. The same went for the language of the Ohrid School established in the late ninth century by Kliment, the most prominent disciple of the brothers from Salonika. With this assertion, Zhivkov incited the Bulgarian scholars to denounce the current "Serbification" of the language in the Yugoslav republic. This exhortation was reiterated in 1967–1968 by a resolution of the Politburo of the CC of the BCP concerning the Macedonian question and by concomitant directives of the Secretariat of the CC. They obliged the Academy of Sciences to coordinate the research activity of historians, linguists and literary scholars who were supposed to elaborate a common and coherent position on "the history, culture and language of Macedonia."¹⁴¹

As a result, the Bulgarian linguists started fighting the theses of their Yugoslav colleagues on a number of historical figures from medieval and Ottoman Macedonia who have left a written legacy. They firmly denounced Blaže Koneski's insistence that the Macedonian language had been developing separately since the era of Cyril and Methodius and their followers.¹⁴² Gradually, the Institute of Bulgarian Language was seized by the spirit of historical revisionism: it began republishing works of Bulgarian scholars from the early twentieth century and the interwar period, previously held to be "chauvinists."¹⁴³ The institute also edited collections of carefully selected opinions of "impartial" Western- and Central European, Russian and Balkan scholars about the Bulgarian character of the Macedonian Slavic vernacular. The canonical title of one of these publications—*Foreign Scholars on the Bulgarian Southwestern Idioms*¹⁴⁴—shows

¹⁴¹ TsPA, F. 1, OP. 35, A.E. 127, L. 17.

¹⁴² Valentin Stankov, "Makedonskiot jazik vo razvojt na slovenskite literaturni jazici" ot Blazhe Koneski," *Bălgarski ezik* 6 (1968).

¹⁴³ This being the case of Stefan Mladenov's *Geschichte der bulgarischen Sprache*, re-edited in Bulgarian fifty years after its initial publication in German: Stefan Mladenov, *Istoriya na bălgarskiya ezik* (Sofia: BAN, 1979). Mladenov's map of the linguistic Greater Bulgaria was frequently reproduced: for instance, in *Uvod v izuchavaneto na yuzhno-slavyanskite ezitsi* (Sofia: BAN, 1986), 22–23. Benyu Tsonev's history of the Bulgarian language from the 1930s was also republished: Benyu Tsonev, *Istoriya na bălgarskiya ezik* (Sofia: BAN, 1984).

¹⁴⁴ *Chuzhdestranni ucheni za yugozapadnite bălgarski govori* (Sofia: BAN, 1979). The collection contains declarations of scholars such as Vuk Karadžić, Vatroslav Jagić, Vatroslav Oblak and Afanasiy Selishchev. The Bulgarian scholars, however, discarded other writings

another conspicuous conceptual evolution: in the 1970s and 1980s, even the expression “Macedonian dialects” disappeared from the terminology used by Sofia’s academia.

However, after resurrecting the image of Greater Bulgaria, the specialists in Sofia faced a significant problem. This was the “lack of understanding” by their foreign (non-Yugoslav) colleagues. The newly codified Macedonian language was taught in a number of departments of Slavic studies in Western Europe and in America as well as in “fraternal countries” of communist Eastern Europe. Even Soviet colleagues were not likely to accept the Bulgarian point of view: there were courses in the Macedonian language at Moscow University led by Rina Usikova, a former student of Samuil Bernstein. Chapters on “Macedonian” appeared in every Russian university textbook of Slavic languages and literatures. Macedonian was also researched, and thus recognized, by the Institute of Slavic and Balkan Studies at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.

The international context definitely did not favor the Bulgarian position. In 1982 the Institute of Bulgarian Language canceled its participation in two major projects: the *Pan-Slavic Linguistic Atlas* and the *Pan-Carpathian Dialectal Atlas* launched, respectively, in 1958 and in 1973 by the International Committee of Slavists and by the Soviet Academy of Sciences. The Bulgarians could not work on these initiatives side-by-side with Yugoslav specialists like Božidar Vidoeski and Pavle Ivić.¹⁴⁵ Otherwise, the scholars from Sofia would have had to accept their colleagues’ recognition of a separate Macedonian language and dialects. As a result, Bulgaria appears in both of the atlases as a blank spot.¹⁴⁶

Seeking to gain legitimacy for their point of view on Macedonian identity and language, the leaders of the Bulgarian Communist Party and state, as well as those of the Academy of Sciences, spread pro-Bulgarian propaganda in international scholarly circles. In 1968–1969 they tried to prevent the University of Chicago from awarding Blaže Koneski an honorary

of Karadžić, Jagić or Oblak in which they defined (some of) the Macedonian Slavic dialects as “Serbian” or as intermediate between Bulgarian and Serbian.

¹⁴⁵ A leading Serbian dialectologist who, among other things, tried to demonstrate the “exceptional” similarity between Serbian and Macedonian and the “big” difference between the latter and Bulgarian: Risteski, *Prilozi*, 164.

¹⁴⁶ This result of nationalist intransigence also provoked debates within the linguistic milieu in Sofia: Dora Ivanova-Mircheva, “Rabotata na bălgarskata komisiya v Obshtoslavianskiya lingvistichen atlas,” *Bălgarski ezik* 4 (1982). See also the polemics between Maksim Mladenov and Ivan Kochev eight years later: Maksim Mladenov, “Otnovo po nyakoi văprosi okolo Obshtoslavianskiya lingvistichen atlas” and Ivan Kochev, “Vmesto otgovor,” *Bălgarski ezik* 4 (1990).

degree.¹⁴⁷ In 1969 the aforementioned resolution on the development of Bulgarian studies (*bălgaristika*) abroad sought to spread the “historical truth” about Macedonia and to counter Yugoslavia’s “falsification” of the history of the Bulgarian language. The resolution led to the establishment of a Center for Bulgarian Studies in the framework of the Academy of Sciences, intended to coordinate historical, linguistic, literary, ethnographic and folkloristic research and to disseminate its “results” outside the country. In 1977 a new resolution of the Politburo of the CC of BCP on the development of Bulgarian studies was targeted at the Macedonian studies that were enjoying success in foreign universities and academies.¹⁴⁸

All these ambitious administrative efforts notwithstanding, the Bulgarian linguists were not able to provide a viable answer to a basic question: even if one grants that Macedonian interpretations of the ethnic identity of medieval or nineteenth-century writers are selective and tendentious, why would a Macedonian *standard* language be impossible *today*? Referring to a dialectal continuum between Bulgaria and Macedonia, as well as invoking history, did not really offer conceptual arguments against what the Bulgarian linguists had previously recognized: the formation of a new literary language, although based on “Bulgarian” dialects. Despite the suppression of Lekov’s grammar, one thing was clear, at least to specialists: contemporary Macedonian was not a “dialect.” Regardless of the opinion Zhivkov expressed as early as 1963, Macedonian had its own grammar, dictionary, literary usage and political and public life. The sociolinguistic criteria distinguishing standardized language variety from “dialect” tended to show the absurdity of the Bulgarian position. Theoretically, it was impossible to claim the “dialectal character” of a standard language. The Institute of Bulgarian Language nevertheless found a “solution.”

The Doctrine of The Unity of the Bulgarian Language

In 1978 the Institute bluntly attacked the Macedonian standard language by publishing a kind of manifesto entitled *The Unity of the Bulgarian Language in the Past and Today*. Initially edited as a pamphlet, the text was republished in the Institute’s review *Bălgarski ezik*.¹⁴⁹ The document

¹⁴⁷ Friedman, “Blaže Koneski vo severnoamerikanskata lingvistika.”

¹⁴⁸ TsPA, F. 1, OP. 66, A.E. 639.

¹⁴⁹ *Edinstvoto na bălgarskiya ezik v minaloto i dnes* (Sofia: BAN, 1978); “Edinstvoto na bălgarskiya ezik v minaloto i dnes,” *Bălgarski ezik* 1 (1978): 1–43.

deserves particular attention insofar as the postulates set down in it are still unshakable among Bulgarian linguists.

From a conceptual point of view, the manifesto was inspired by a thesis of Melitina Borodina, a Soviet specialist in Romance languages. According to her, the dialects do not necessarily represent oral linguistic varieties. Referring to this discovery, the Bulgarian scholars insisted on the possible existence of “literary dialects” that they also identified as “regional literary languages” or “versions of a national language.” This solution allowed recognition of the obvious—the existence of a separate Macedonian literary norm—without surrendering the assertion of a subordinate character of Macedonian vis-à-vis Bulgarian, of its “dialectal” status. Thus the Macedonian language was defined by *The Unity* as a “regional written norm of the Bulgarian language” (*pismeno-regionalna norma na bălgarskiya ezik*) used in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia and based on the southwestern Bulgarian A-dialect.¹⁵⁰

This allegation was substantiated using a certain linguistic precedent: there was already a normalized Slavic variety distinct from standard Bulgarian but claiming a Bulgarian identity. It was the so-called *banátsći balgarsći* or *palćensći*—the idiom of a Catholic Bulgarian minority living in the Banat region (located mostly in modern Romania).¹⁵¹ As early as 1967, the dialectologist Stoyko Stoykov classified Banat Bulgarian as a “second Bulgarian literary language.” Stoykov’s colleagues gladly utilized the existence of such a parallel norm in order to classify Macedonian in a similar way: as a written “regional language” used outside the state boundaries of Bulgaria but possessing an essential Bulgarian identity.

Sofia’s academicians were obviously not preoccupied with the obvious and significant differences between Banat Bulgarian and Macedonian. The latter certainly does not claim the ethnic or national belonging of the former. For the Bulgarians from western Romania, the Bulgarian linguistic institute takes into account the ethnic self-identification of the speakers (as problematic as it actually is). Yet Macedonian is relegated to the status of a “regional written norm” only on the basis of an essentialist definition,

¹⁵⁰ The term refers to a certain phonetic particularity of the Veles-Prilep-Kičevo-Bitola dialect, namely the evolution of the Old Slavonic nasal *o* into *a*: for instance, *zab*, *raka* (from Old Slavonic *zъbъ*, *rъka*) vs. *zăb*, *răka* in standard Bulgarian (meaning “tooth” and “hand” respectively).

¹⁵¹ For an analysis of the various language policies (Habsburg, Hungarian, Romanian, Bulgarian) that have shaped this idiom, see Rossitza Guentcheva, “State, Nation and Language: The Bulgarian Community in the Region of Banat, 1860s-1990s” (PhD diss., Cambridge University, 2001).

disregarding the modern realities of identity. In this way, the language of some 15,000 persons, used mostly in church booklets and in a few periodicals, was put on the same level as one of the Yugoslav federation's official languages, perceived as a mother tongue by about 2 million people.

The demonstration of "the unity" of the Bulgarian language "today" depended, however, on the confirmation of its unity "in the past." Here, the Bulgarian scholars walked onto a somewhat larger battlefield: the definition of the "ethnic" identity of Old (Church) Slavonic, that is, of the language variety used in the first translations and original works in Slavic. According to the logic followed by Sofia's scholars, the demonstration of its "Bulgarian character" would *a fortiori* corroborate the present "unity" of the Bulgarian language, hence the "Bulgarian" nature of Macedonian.

The reason was that the Old Slavonic language was based on idioms spoken in the ninth century in the region of Salonika, the native place of Cyril and Methodius, which is held to be the capital of geographic Macedonia. Traditionally, in Bulgarian studies the language codified by the brothers from Salonika is labeled "Old Bulgarian" (*starobălgarski*). This designation also used to be found in writings of German-speaking scholars, some of which still use *Altbulgarisch* as a term equivalent to *Altkirchenslawisch*.¹⁵² It must be noted that Cyril and Methodius have been among the "foundation myths" of Bulgarian nationalism since its very construction in the nineteenth century. The two Byzantine missionaries were, and are even nowadays, regarded as being (at least partially) of Bulgarian origin. Their activity—the creation of the Slavic Glagolitic script (an act that has nothing to do with Bulgaria)—as well as its development into Cyrillic in the late ninth- and tenth-century Bulgarian state (during the so-called Golden Age of Old Bulgarian literature and culture) constitute the most important alleged "contributions" of the country to world civilization. However, given the birthplace of Cyril and Methodius, it is not surprising that, following the Bulgarian example, Macedonian nationalism also claims them as national emblems. In an attempt to prove the historical continuity of their language, scholars from Skopje insist that Old Slavonic was essentially Macedonian.¹⁵³

¹⁵² It should be distinguished from the later Church Slavonic—the Russian version of the Old Slavonic/"Old Bulgarian" mentioned earlier.

¹⁵³ Vaillant had named the idiom of the creators of the Slavic script "Old Macedonian" (*vieux macédonien*): André Vaillant, *Manuel du vieux slave* (Paris: Institut d'études slaves, 1948), 20.

This designation certainly projects, retroactively, modern linguistic realities over the distant past—in exactly the same manner as the ethnicizing of the same extinct language variety as “Old Bulgarian.”¹⁵⁴ In *The Unity*, the language’s “Bulgarian” character is emphasized in order to counter the claims of a distinct Macedonian tongue today. Insofar as the historical continuity claimed by the latter is “fake,” it must lack any legitimate foundation outside the age-old history of the Bulgarian language. According to Sofia’s academic institute, if the idiom of Cyril and Methodius was “Bulgarian,” this is also the case of the Macedonian Slavic dialects today—and hence, of the linguistic norm used in Skopje.

The reaction from Skopje was not long in coming. In 1978 leading Macedonian linguists responded to the Bulgarian Academy’s pamphlet with a rival work “demonstrating” the historical continuity and legitimacy of the modern Macedonian language.¹⁵⁵ The author of the first Macedonian scholarly grammar—the American Horace Lunt—declared that the comparison between the “ephemeral” idiom of “several villages” in Banat and the official language of the Yugoslav republic was frivolous at best.¹⁵⁶ Lunt rejected the Bulgarian argument as incompetent in terms of linguistic theory and based on suggestions and claims, many of which he found dubious, exaggerated or false. Thus Bulgaro-Macedonian polemics again took on a larger international significance within the academic milieu of Slavic studies.

To fully understand the 1978 Bulgarian linguistic manifesto, another international factor must be taken into account as well. This was Russian/Soviet linguistics. This aspect is suggested by the initial reference to a Soviet scholar. And it is especially visible in the insistence on the Bulgarian belonging of Old Slavonic: the emphasis is also tacitly directed against the linguists from the communist and Slavic Big Brother.

In the eyes of their Bulgarian colleagues, the Russians had committed—and today still persist in—two interrelated “sins.” First, they constantly

¹⁵⁴ Although in the original sources, this idiom is most often named simply “Slavic”/“Slavonic” (*slověnskā rěčb*, *slověnskā jazyk*), Bulgarian specialists such as Ivan Duridanov and Dora Ivanova-Mircheva insist that all designations such as *Alt-slawisch*, *Alt-kirchenslawisch*, *Old (Church) Slavonic*, *slavon* and *vieux slave* are incorrect (*nepravilni*): *Uvod v izuchavaneto na yuzhnoslavyanskite ezitsi*, 49–52.

¹⁵⁵ Todor Dimitrovski, Blaže Koneski and Trajko Stamatovski, *Za makedonskiot jazik* (Skopje: Institut za makedonski jazik, 1978).

¹⁵⁶ Horace Lunt, “Some Sociolinguistic Aspects of Macedonian and Bulgarian,” in *Language and Literary Theory: In Honor of Ladislav Matejka*, ed. Benjamin Stolz et al. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1984), 87–88. See Guentcheva, “State, Nation and Language,” 210.

labeled the language of the first Glagolitic and Cyrillic texts “Old Slavonic” (*staroslavjanskiy yazyk*) instead of “Old Bulgarian.” In this way, the Russian scholars sought to avoid a problematic ethnicization of a language variety that was more or less common to all Slavs eleven centuries ago. But this terminology might also have been chosen to protect Russian national prestige: the recognition of “Old Bulgarian” would symbolically reduce the exceptional character of Medieval Rus, transforming it into the inheritor of a small Balkan culture.¹⁵⁷ And the second (and perhaps more important) sin: as noted above, after Samuil Bernstein in the 1930s, Russian and Soviet Slavic studies recognized the existence of a separate Macedonian language and nationality. Occasionally, Russian Slavists have even stated that Old Slavonic was based on “Macedonian dialects.”

That is why the thesis of the past and present “unity” of the Bulgarian language had an implicit purpose, less obvious than the narrow Balkan agenda. Sofia’s linguists obtained from the academic and party authorities an exceptional *carte blanche* that was generally refused to the historians: to fight the interpretations of the “comrades” from Moscow. The anti-Skopje agenda was thus entangled with an anti-Moscow one.¹⁵⁸ In 1983, during the Congress of Slavic Studies in Kiev, the leadership of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences urged dialectologist Maksim Mladenov to deliver a report against Bernstein.¹⁵⁹ Throughout the 1980s the review of the Institute of Bulgarian Language openly criticized Russian scholars who denied the existence of “Old Bulgarian” and/or shared a “Macedonist” point of view.¹⁶⁰ This was also the period when the Institute of Bulgarian Language tried to eradicate some salient “Russianisms” from everyday

¹⁵⁷ The Bulgarian scholars were, and are, quite conscious of those ramifications. Since the late 1960s, Bulgarian Russophobic scholars like the historian Nikolay Genchev were arguing that Bulgarian medieval culture was the “mother” of the Russian: for instance, Nikolay Genchev, “Uchitelka na zhivota, no koga?” *Mladezh* 8 (1966).

¹⁵⁸ The same “soft Russophobia” was promoted by another academic institute created in 1980 in the framework of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (successor to a commission that existed since 1971): the Cyrillo-Methodian Research Center (*Kirilo-Metodievski nauchen tsentär*). “Cyrillo-Methodian Studies” (*kirilometodievistika*) was created to counter Yugoslav and Russian denials of the “Bulgarian character” of the brothers from Salonika and of their legacy.

¹⁵⁹ Information from Dina Stanisheva, former member of the Institute of Bulgarian Language.

¹⁶⁰ Ivan Duridanov, “Bălgarskiyat ezik v edin uvod v slavyanskata filologiya,” *Bălgarski ezik* 3 (1983); Ivan Kochev, “Za osnovnite problemi na bălgarskata dialektologiya,” *Bălgarski ezik* 2 (1984); Dora Ivanova-Mircheva, “Otnovo za terminologiyata i za oshte neshto . . .,” *Bălgarski ezik* 3 (1987).

speech—the same terms that were encouraged in the first years of the communist regime.¹⁶¹

The institute's own staff experienced dramatic upheaval. Soon after the publication of *The Unity of the Bulgarian Language*, some members were dismissed: the unstated pretext was that they were “Bernsteinians” and hence possible traitors to the national cause. As a result, in the 1980s, the “Bulgarian belonging” of the Macedonian Slavic vernacular and the “Serbification” of Skopje's standard norm became frequent topics of polemical essays.¹⁶² In this activity, the scholars from the Institute of Bulgarian Language were encouraged by the party and state leadership. In 1983 the Politburo of the CC of BCP exhorted the linguists to oppose “every attempt to falsify the truth about the Bulgarian people [and] the unity of its language.”¹⁶³ The tone of the Bulgarian publications vis-à-vis Skopje became highly combative. In the mid-1980s, Konstantin Popov, a scholar from Sofia University, bluntly identified the Macedonian standard language as a “provincial jargon.”¹⁶⁴

At the same time, Sofia's academic community sought out foreign linguists who could advocate the Bulgarian doctrine. Since 1977 a Summer Seminar in Bulgarian Language, held in Veliko Tărnovo, was intended to counter the influence over international Slavic studies of the already existing Seminar on Macedonian Language in Ohrid. The outreach to cultivate supporters of the Bulgarian linguistic cause nevertheless had only limited success. By the end of the communist era, only Otto Kronsteiner, a Slavist from Salzburg, Austria, fully embraced the Bulgarian polemicists' point of view, labeling Macedonian a “Bulgarian language written on a Serbian typewriter.”¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹ This was already the policy of Lyubomir Andreychin, head of the Institute until 1975. See, for example, Lyubomir Andreychin, “*Sblăskvaniya*, a ne ‘stălknoveniya,’” *Bălgarski ezik* 3 (1972).

¹⁶² For instance, Slavka Velichkova, “*Za sărbiziraneto na obshtestveno-politicheskata leksika v pechata na SR Makedoniya*,” *Bălgarski ezik* 2 (1980). Trying to avoid any reference to “Macedonian,” Velichkova labeled the standard Macedonian language “RF” (*regionalna forma*—the “regional form” of the Bulgarian language).

¹⁶³ TsPA, F. 1, OP. 67, A.E. 2592, L. 2–6.

¹⁶⁴ Popov “translated” Kočo Racin's poem *Lenka* in a non-standard (and rather imaginary) variety from western Bulgaria in order to “demonstrate” the negligible difference between it and Macedonian: Popov, *Iz istoriyata*, 174–176.

¹⁶⁵ See the collective writing of Ivan Kochev, Otto Kronsteiner and Ivan Aleksandrov, “*Săchinyavaneto na t.nar. makedonski knizhoven ezik*,” *Makedonska biblioteka* 23 (1993). Kronsteiner's open adoption of the Bulgarian nationalist cause only compromised him in the eyes of his Austrian and Western European colleagues.

Linguistic Revisionism in Bulgaria and in Macedonia

The controversies presented thus far show the extent to which Bulgarian and Macedonian language-planning, as well as Bulgarian and Macedonian linguistics, are historically entangled, not only with each other but also with their Serbian and Russian counterparts. However, their entanglement looks instead like a disentanglement: it is based only on opposition and denial, repudiation and distance. Is this relationship only negative?

Actually, it is more complex than that. First of all, the affirmation of the Macedonian language also entailed some mutations of the traditional Bulgarian argument. It was by no means a mere repetition of the arsenal used during the Bulgarian-Serbian quarrel several decades earlier. For instance, in the early twentieth century, the existence of three forms of the definite article in Macedonian was cited by Sofia to demonstrate that the Macedonians were “three times as Bulgarian as the other Bulgarians.” Yet the same feature was later cited by Skopje as evidence of a distinct Macedonian identity. Consequently, Bulgarian linguists tried to fight this “proof” and indicated the presence of the triple article in the Rhodopes and in other parts of Bulgaria.¹⁶⁶

Second, Bulgarian-Macedonian linguistic debates also tended to cause revisions and modifications of the two existing standard norms as such. Sofia’s vociferous rejection of the “Serbified” norm of Skopje indeed inspired some Macedonian scholars, public figures and political activists to strive for a different and “purer” literary language. Projects of “better Macedonian” were launched by various milieus pursuing diverse tasks. Likewise, in Sofia, the success of the Macedonian language in Yugoslavia and within the sizable Macedonian diaspora in Europe, America and Australia inspired projects of language revision intended to bring the Bulgarian norm closer to the Macedonian. In some cases, Macedonian language varieties were also used in propagandistic ways, for the Bulgarian national cause.

In Sofia, calls for revision of the standard norm—particularly of the orthography—were heard as early as 1951, during a scholarly conference. In fact, a reform in 1945, launched by the authorities of the communist-led Fatherland Front (OF), simplified the Bulgarian script and brought it somewhat closer to contemporary Russian orthography but

¹⁶⁶ As noticed by Sériot, “Faut-il que les langues,” 182–183.

also to that of Serbian and Macedonian (which was in the process of formation). However, the phonetic principles of the latter remained fairly distant from the Bulgarian morphological writing. Furthermore, the so-called OF-orthography suppressed two characters—the *Yat* and the Big *Yus*—whose existence made possible the optional pronunciation of *e/ya* and *a/ă*, respectively. In the past, the use of *Yat* and *Yus* allowed the western Bulgarian as well as the “typical Macedonian” ekavian and *A-* pronunciation of these Old Slavonic vowels.¹⁶⁷ Consequently, their deletion from the alphabet—especially the removal of the *Yat*—further marginalized the western Bulgarian dialects in favor of the yakavian eastern Bulgarian. Thus it distanced the standard Bulgarian pronunciation even further from that of Macedonian.

In response, throughout the 1950s and the 1960s, a number of linguists and writers suggested changes in the standard script either in order to bring it closer to that of Macedonian (and, ironically, to that of Serbian) or to authorize the western Bulgarian and Macedonian articulation. Among the proposals was the elimination of the letters *я* (*ya*), *ю* (*yu*), *ь* (soft sign) and *ѣ* (*sht*), letters that did not figure in the newly codified Macedonian alphabet. Some of the projects openly called for their replacement with Serbian/Macedonian analogues such as *ja*, *jy*, *j* and *um*.¹⁶⁸ There were also ideas to introduce special characters for *dzh* and *dz*, as in Macedonian (*џ*, *s*). Some of the authors insisted on incorporating vocalization of the consonants into written speech—that is, on phoneticization of the orthography in a Macedonian/Serbo-Croatian way.¹⁶⁹ And there were more and more appeals to restore the letter *Yat* to the Bulgarian alphabet: its facultative yakavian-ekavian pronunciation, like before the introduction of the OF reform, was expected to reduce the gap between the Bulgarian and the Macedonian accent.¹⁷⁰ Some of these ideas were put

¹⁶⁷ For instance, in the western-central dialect of Macedonian, basis of the standard language, as well as in western Bulgarian idioms, the standard Bulgarian words *lyato* (“summer”) and *mlyako* (“milk”), both etymologically containing *Yat*, are pronounced *leto* and *mleko*. In the same way, the *Yus*-containing words *răka* (“hand”) and *zăb* (“tooth”) are pronounced *raka* and *zab* in Macedonian.

¹⁶⁸ For *я* and *ю* a Bulgarian specialist in Serbo-Croatian also suggested the versions *ia* and *iy*, identical to those used by Krste Misirkov: Lyubomir Andreychin, “Nyakoi vāprosi na bălgarskiya pravopis,” *Bălgarski ezik* 3–4 (1973): 189–190.

¹⁶⁹ For instance, although the word *zhenitba* (“wedding”) is pronounced “zhenidba” in Bulgarian, it is written with a *t*—unlike the phonetic Macedonian (and Serbian) writing of the same word with a *d*.

¹⁷⁰ Concerning these projects, apart from the aforementioned article of Andreychin, see Rusin Rusinov, “Pravogovor, pravopis i ezikovo obuchenie,” and the debate in *Bălgarski*

forth by official intellectuals close to the party and state leadership, such as the writer Georgi Dzhagarov (famous in Yugoslavia for his refusal to sign bilateral contracts in Macedonian) or the (former Macedonian) poet Venko Markovski.¹⁷¹

As a result, the Institute of Bulgarian Language authorized certain concessions. In 1983 the *Orthographic Dictionary of the Contemporary Bulgarian Literary Language*, edited by the Academy of Sciences, accepted the ekavian pronunciation in some cases.¹⁷² In this way, a salient characteristic of western Bulgarian and Macedonian idioms was partially endorsed in order to confirm the “unity” of the Bulgarian language. The idea to resurrect the use of *Yat* was, however, abandoned, only to reappear after the fall of communism. In the early 1990s anticommunist and nationalistic circles again proposed its introduction, as part of a more general symbolic rejection of the “communist orthography” accepted in 1945.¹⁷³ In any case, to this day, Bulgarian academia has not authorized general orthographical modification. It is true that such an act would complicate written expression. Then again, the reasons for such reluctance may be more than practical. In reality, the reintroduction of letters such as *Yat* and *Yus* would only *widen* the gap between the contemporary Bulgarian and the Macedonian *orthography*: in the latter they do not exist either.

As the projects of revision of standard Bulgarian took time to attract sufficient attention and were not so successful in any case, certain official and non-official milieus tried other means to reduce the gap between

ezik 3–4 (1973). The problem with the elimination of *Yat* is not only that it made Bulgarian predominantly yakavian, unlike the ekavian Macedonian, but also that Serbian is also (ij) ekavian. Hence the articulation of many words in Macedonian is identical to Serbian but different from standard (non-western) Bulgarian.

¹⁷¹ As mentioned earlier, during the interwar period, Markovski was one of the most important poets in vernacular idiom from Vardar Macedonia and, in 1944–1945, he was one of the codifiers of modern Macedonian. However, after 1948, Markovski opted for Stalin against Tito's authority—a choice that got him sent to the infamous Goli Otok, a labor camp for “Cominformists” on a barren Adriatic island. After his release, in 1965, Markovski moved to Sofia. There, this time as a “Macedonian Bulgarian” patriot, he started denying the Macedonian national identity as a Serbian/Yugoslav fabrication. As an important gauge in the identity dispute between Bulgaria and Yugoslav Macedonia, Markovski entered the entourage of Zhivkov. In the early 1970s the poet called for the reintroduction of the *Yat* and of the Big *Yus* in the Bulgarian alphabet—an insistence that got the attention of the highest party authorities: TsPA, F. 1, OP. 41, A.E. 82, L. 2–15. Incidentally, the pre-OF Bulgarian orthography was (and is) used by Macedonian pro-Bulgarian diaspora circles, like the Macedonian Patriotic Organization, active in the United States and Canada.

¹⁷² *Pravopisn rechnik na sãvremenniya bãlgarski knizhoven ezik* (Sofia: BAN, 1983), 20.

¹⁷³ Rusin Rusinov, “Za bãlgarskiya pravopis (v otgovor na negovi krititsi),” *Bãlgarski ezik* 5 (1991).

Bulgarian and Macedonian. They attempted to modify *Macedonian* or to substitute it, at least symbolically, with a “better” one.

Throughout the 1950s and the 1960s, the Yugoslav bureau of Radio Sofia also broadcasted in the “Macedonian language.” This was done purely for propaganda purposes: the program was supposed to acquaint Yugoslav Macedonians with the “correct” political positions of Bulgaria and of the USSR as well as with the “true” version of Macedonia’s history. However, the broadcasts did not use the official “language of Skopje.” The director—Macedonian native Kosta Tsárnushanov—employed his native dialect from the area of Prilep, “purified of the Serbisms” in the standard language. Hence, all the words used for technical terms and abstract concepts were taken from Bulgarian.

Unfortunately, these were precisely the terms that were *incomprehensible* to the target audience—the people from the Yugoslav republic. The program could have been broadcasted with the same results in standard Bulgarian since, apart from the abstract and specialized lexicon that is Russian-derived in Bulgarian (and Serbian-derived in Macedonian), the other strata of the Bulgarian language do not create so considerable problems of understanding.¹⁷⁴ This was one reason the “Macedonian” broadcasts were canceled in 1968. The other reason was, of course, the fact that they could be interpreted, despite their Bulgarian nationalistic message (especially emphasized in the 1960s), as a symbolic recognition of the existence of a Macedonian language and of its distinctiveness from Bulgarian.¹⁷⁵

There was, however, another attempt to promote an “alternative Macedonian,” closer to standard Bulgarian, which achieved some success for several years. Initiated by Macedonians with Bulgarian culture, it was nevertheless pursued outside Bulgaria. It was the so-called “Macedonian language of the Slavomacedonians from Greek Macedonia” in use between 1952 and 1957. After the Tito-Stalin break, the Communist Party of Greece took the Soviet stance, just as the other Cominform parties did. This required the termination of “Titoist propaganda” among numerous Slav-speaking refugees from the Greek Civil War (1946–1949) residing in refugee

¹⁷⁴ At least this is the belief of the radio authorities: TsDA, F. 206, OP. 13, A.E. 98, L. 18.

¹⁷⁵ A similar attempt was made in the mid-1980s by pro-Bulgarian Macedonian diaspora circles controlled by the former IMRO leader Ivan Mihaylov: they launched radio broadcasts both in Bulgarian and in the “dialect of Bitola.” This broadcasting was also short-lived: Ivan Katardžiev, *Makedonija sto godini po Ilindenskoto vostanie* (Skopje: Kultura, 2003), 224.

centers in Eastern European socialist countries (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria) but under CPG administration. Hence, the education of refugees, especially of children, in standard Macedonian was stopped: the Greek communist leadership decided to introduce a language based on the dialects of Greek or Aegean Macedonia.

In 1952 this language “engineering” was entrusted to Atanas Peykov (Athanasios Peikos), a political emigre from the region of Kastoria who had formerly worked in Radio Sofia. Peykov quickly issued a “grammar” and a textbook composed in a language variety quasi-identical to standard Bulgarian. In fact, the books’ standard Bulgarian content was barely diversified, with relatively few dialectal forms of Macedonian. Yet this idiom purported to represent “genuine” Macedonian, purified of the Serbo-Croatian borrowings of the language of Skopje. The Macedonian section of *Nea Ellada*, the Greek communist publishing house in Bucharest, also compiled a number of school textbooks and literary works in this—rather shifting—variety.¹⁷⁶ The Soviet-Yugoslav rapprochement that began in the mid-1950s soon put an end to the education in “Aegean Macedonian.” Still, this alternative “norm” made some of the Slav-speaking refugees from Greece reluctant to adopt the Macedonian standard language used in Yugoslavia, where many of them finally settled.¹⁷⁷

Inside Yugoslav Macedonia, the linguistic situation also provoked dissatisfaction and uncertainty. This unease grew and became more visible by the late 1980s, as the “fraternal” South Slavic federation gradually disintegrated. Above all, with the growth of Macedonian nationalism, often sponsored by diaspora circles outside the country, the Macedono-Serb(o-Croat)ian bilingualism of the generations of Macedonians educated in Yugoslavia was becoming a contested issue.

Particularly during the initial years of Tito’s federation, a number of political and academic figures in Skopje encouraged an osmosis of Macedonian and Serbo-Croatian.¹⁷⁸ In reality, expressions in the latter tended to replace, in some respects, those in the former.¹⁷⁹ Standard Macedonian (which, from a Bulgarian point of view, was “Serbified” enough) was

¹⁷⁶ See *Gramatika po makedonski ezik* (Bucharest: Nea Elada, Makedonski otdel, 1952). Other titles are listed in Petre Nakovski, *Makedonski deca vo Polska 1948–1968* (Skopje: Mlad borec, 1987), 193, and in Risto Kirjazovski, *Makedonskata politička emigracija od Egejskiot del na Makedonija vo Istočnoevropskite zemji po Vtorata svetska vojna* (Skopje: Kultura, 1989), 224–225.

¹⁷⁷ This is the evaluation of Christian Voss (Voss, “Reviziya,” xvi).

¹⁷⁸ See the statements gathered by Tsárnushanov, *Makedonizmät*, 407.

¹⁷⁹ Friedman, “The Sociolinguistics,” 46.

modified even further in its everyday usage by the impact of the Yugoslav lingua franca—Serbo-Croatian, spoken (at least in Macedonia, similarly to Serbia) in its ekavian form but most often written in Latin characters. This impact was (and even today is) visible on all levels of language: in the phonetics (the pronunciation), in the vocabulary, in the syntax and even in the morphology. Since the 1960s the Yugoslav acculturation of the younger generations resulted in frequent use of the Latin (Croatian-Serbian) script instead of the traditional Cyrillic.¹⁸⁰

Although Macedonian linguists tried to control, through the media, the orthography, pronunciation and “correct” usage of words,¹⁸¹ in the 1980s some specialists feared that Macedonian-Serbian bilingualism had gone too far. In the public arena, the voices opposing the use of “Serbisms” multiplied: the newspaper *Nova Makedonija* published such “letters from ordinary citizens.”¹⁸² By the end of the last decade of Yugoslavia, certain authors were openly asking: “Do we speak Macedonian?”¹⁸³

Facing these purist trends, most of the linguists naturally tried to protect their own symbolic capital. However, the tolerance of some leading figures of Macedonian linguistics towards the assimilation of Macedonian to Serbian proved counterproductive. In 1988 Trajko Stamatovski, head of the Institute for Macedonian Language, provoked a scandal with his unrestrained approval of the historical “evolution” of Macedonians towards a “bilingual nation”—interpreted by Stamatovski’s adversaries as a “Serbo-Macedonian nation.”¹⁸⁴ Later, Blaže Koneski likewise shocked parts of the Macedonian public when he expressed personal pride in his uncle Gligor Ljame Sokolović (one of the champions of Serbian propaganda in Ottoman Macedonia in the early twentieth century) as well as nostalgic memories of his own Serbian acculturation before World War II.¹⁸⁵

By the time the Yugoslav federation collapsed, the Macedonian standard norm was shaken by genuine linguistic revisionism. Anti-Serbian

¹⁸⁰ Sometimes, absurd jumbles of Latin and Cyrillic appear: Friedman, “The Implementation,” 45; Friedman, “Macedonian: Codification and Lexicon,” 308. Today, on the Internet, Macedonians use Latin characters far more frequently than Bulgarians.

¹⁸¹ For instance, the column “Jazično katče” in the daily newspaper *Nova Makedonija*, by the linguist Blagoja Korubin. The articles are republished in Blagoja Korubin, *Jazikot naš denešen*, vol. 1–4 (Skopje: Naša kniga/Literaturen zbor/Studentski zbor/Ogledalo, 1969, 1976, 1980, 1986).

¹⁸² See the data of Popov, *Iz istoriyata*, 188; Tsārnushanov, *Makedonizmāt*, 447–449.

¹⁸³ Nikola Koteski, *Zboruvame li makedonski* (Ohrid: Nezavisni izdanija, 1989).

¹⁸⁴ Trajko Stamatovski, “Ne gledam ništo lošo vo toa što stanuvame bilingvalna nacija,” *Lik*, June 8, 1988; Voss, “Reviziya,” xx.

¹⁸⁵ See Cane Andreevski, *Razgovori so Koneski* (Skopje: Kultura, 1991).

and also anti-Yugoslav in inspiration, it tried to discredit the existing academic elite, particularly the linguists. A significant blow against them was the publication of the minutes from the first commission charged with the codification of Macedonian (November–December 1944).¹⁸⁶ These stenographic notes were soon wielded by Bulgarian polemicists trying to show the “absurdities” in the creation of the modern Macedonian norm, as well as the purely political imperatives that guided this process.¹⁸⁷ In Macedonia itself, the work of the language commissions from 1944–1945 was put into question by certain calls for modification of the alphabet.

In 1990 the Macedonian press became a battlefield between representatives of the Yugoslav establishment and their opponents who were promoting such changes. For instance, reformists wanted to replace the characters that stand for the palatal consonants *nj* and *lj*: the letter for *lj* (Љ) actually tends to “Serbify” the pronunciation of the younger generations.¹⁸⁸ Another proposal was even more symbolically fraught: the idea of (re)introducing a character for the so-called dark vowel (ǣ). As noted above, the letter ɹ was removed from the alphabet adopted in 1945: both it and the vowel it stands for are, from a symbolic point of view, too “Bulgarian.” However, the presence of the schwa in certain words of the standard language, as well as its abundant usage in various Macedonian dialects, was, for a number of journalists and scholars, a sufficient reason to insist on the adoption of a letter denoting the “traditional Macedonian” sound. Most of them opted for the character ɹ, which had also been accepted by the first language commission in 1944.¹⁸⁹

The proclamation of Macedonia’s independence in 1991, as well as the 1993 death of the main language codifier Blaže Koneski, only catalyzed the revisionism. It found direct political articulation within the new anticommunist nationalist party VMRO-DPMNE. In 1996 its leader, Georgievski, began writing his given name as *Ljubčo* with a *b*: a graphic that corresponds to the morphological principles of Bulgarian orthography but not

¹⁸⁶ Published in Risteski, *Sozdavanjeto*.

¹⁸⁷ Kochev, Kronsteiner and Aleksandrov, “Săchinyavaneto.”

¹⁸⁸ See Friedman, “The Sociolinguistics,” 46; Ristovski, *Soznajbi za jazikot*, 351. The Bulgarian linguists immediately noticed this trend: Stoyan Zharev, “Nyakoi săvremenni tendentsii v dvizhenieto za ezikova kultura v SR Makedoniya,” *Bălgarski ezik* 4 (1990). In his publication, Zharev labels the standard Macedonian language “RN” (*regionalna norma*—“regional norm”).

¹⁸⁹ Risteski, *Prilozi*, 149.

to the phonetic character of the Macedonian (or the Serbian) script.¹⁹⁰ By the late 1990s, writers and journalists close to the VMRO-DPMNE sought to discredit Koneski as a “Serbian agent” and glorify Venko Markovski, his opponent in the first language commission and, later, a leading Bulgarian nationalist.¹⁹¹

These authors were certainly pro-Bulgarian. They condemned not only the existing orthographic and linguistic norms but also the Macedonian national identity as such: they denounced it, just like in Sofia, as a “Serbian” substitute for the “genuine” Bulgarian identity of Macedonian Slavs.¹⁹² In 2000 language revisionism even left its mark on the first Macedonian historical dictionary published by Skopje’s Institute for National History. Instead of emphasizing the great patriotic contribution of Blaže Koneski, the short entry dedicated to him stated only that, within the codifying commission, he insisted on the introduction “of the Serbian alphabet (that of Vuk Karadžić) in Macedonia.”¹⁹³ This phrase had an almost explosive effect on the academic milieu in Skopje: for the first time, an official publication was repeating the Bulgarian stigmatization of the father of the Macedonian literary language as a pro-Serbian advocate.¹⁹⁴ Thus the beginning of the twenty-first century was accompanied by dilemmas about the national language norm that should have been resolved decades earlier. The rejection of its codifiers particularly risked inflaming the age-old divisions between pro-Bulgarians and pro-Serbs.

However, despite the implicit support from the government of Ljubčo Georgievski, linguistic revisionism in the former Yugoslav republic failed. Supporters of a modification of the orthography and lexicon came mostly from the fringes of the academic establishment. The idea of revising the already sanctioned alphabet gradually compromised the VMRO-DPMNE as a “pro-Bulgarian party” (which it was not, taken as a whole). The need to erase this stigma might explain the shift towards the imagery of ancient Macedonia introduced by the post-Georgievski leadership of the party. Obviously, this was the safest way to get beyond the impasse.

¹⁹⁰ Voss, “Reviziya,” x. The correct Macedonian writing is *Ljupčo* with *p*.

¹⁹¹ Mladen Srbinovski, *Makedonski Faust* (Skopje: Babilon, 1999).

¹⁹² See, for example, Dimitar Dimitrov, *Imeto i umot* (Skopje: Naše delo, 1999). In 1998–1999, Dimitrov was the minister of culture in the cabinet of Ljubčo Georgievski.

¹⁹³ *Makedonski istoriski rečnik* (Skopje: INI, 2000), 245.

¹⁹⁴ About the dispute that ensued between Stojan Kiselinoski, the editor-in-chief of the dictionary, and members of the former Yugoslav mainstream (Trajko Stamatovski, Atanas Vangelov, Jovan Pavlovski), see Voss, “Reviziya,” xvi–xx.

*Conclusion:**National Languages as a Result of International Entanglement*

Before concluding, let me try to give a final answer to some of the questions asked in the beginning of this chapter—in particular, if there is any basis for asserting the “nonexistence” of Macedonian. In claiming that Macedonian is “artificial,” the Bulgarian perspective relies on two points: its actual similarity with Bulgarian and the political fiat that determined its codification.

Concerning the first point, the Bulgarians often pretend that the relationship between their language and Skopje’s norm is exactly the same as the one between German and “Austrian,” English and “American,” Romanian and “Moldovan” or Serbian and Croatian. However, such a comparison is, from a sociolinguistic point of view, misleading. First, there is no Austrian or American standard language. The difference between Moldovan and Romanian is limited to the accent and to the use of some Russian loanwords in the Republic of Moldova (as well as the use of Cyrillic for Moldovan in Transnistria). These are clearly not two distinct norms: not surprisingly, even those who claim to speak “Moldovan” often admit it is identical to Romanian. Second, unlike Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian/Montenegrin, which could be classified as the same (albeit polycentric) norm based on the štokavian mega-dialect,¹⁹⁵ Bulgarian and Macedonian are based on dialects that are geographically distant and divided by a number of linguistic traits. Furthermore, they were normalized under different foreign influences (Russian vs. Serbian). As a result, the relationship between the *norms* of Sofia and Skopje is instead comparable to that between Russian and Ukrainian, or Danish and Swedish.¹⁹⁶ Otherwise, the historical disentanglement of the Bulgarian and Macedonian national *identities* is certainly much more recent than the one between the Russian and Ukrainian—not to mention the Danish and Swedish—identities. It is this fact that makes recognizing the existence of Macedonian so difficult for the Bulgarians.

That political decisions behind the establishment of the contemporary Macedonian norm do not discredit it either. One can find political resolutions and inaugural “congresses” and “commissions” of language codifi-

¹⁹⁵ The issue is, however, politically delicate: see Ronelle Alexander’s article in this volume.

¹⁹⁶ See Kloss, “Abstand Languages.”

cation in a number of national contexts. (Socio)linguists such as Joshua Fishman have researched such aspects in the *language planning* of Catalan, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Indonesian, Yiddish, Dutch (Flemish), and so on. Phenomena of this kind are to be found in cases of languages whose “legitimacy” is never disputed: Modern Turkish, Polish, even Hebrew.¹⁹⁷ The fact that Macedonian was largely codified by a single individual—Blaže Koneski—is also not unnatural. Koneski had a number of illustrious precursors elsewhere whose activity had clear political stakes, including Vuk Karadžić (for Serbian and Serbo-Croatian), Aasen (New Norwegian or *Nynorsk*), Ben Yehuda (Modern Hebrew), Atatürk (Modern Turkish) and Aavik (Estonian).¹⁹⁸

What the simplistic conclusions ignore is that every national language is an “artifact,” a result of meta-linguistic intervention that separates the “correct” from the “incorrect.”¹⁹⁹ It is a social and cultural reality, constructed through projects and actions that are eminently political. While scholars from Sofia insist that the codification of Macedonian was “politically motivated,” they do not note that their own idiom was also constructed in a given political context. For Bulgarian, this context was the late Ottoman era and the first decades after the creation of a nation-state in 1878. For Macedonian, this was Yugoslav Macedonia before and after the creation of a “national” republic. Both cases represent language planning: there are no “natural” national languages distinct from the “artificial” ones.

Furthermore, national languages are impossible without interaction with a certain *inter*-national context. This fact contradicts the traditional representation of language as a refuge of collective authenticity, a sanctuary of the *Volksgeist*. National literary norms are traditionally seen as stand-alone entities with an age-old history. “Influences” between the languages are recognized, but these are regarded only as epiphenomena that do not affect the core identity of the “language.” However, analysis of Bulgarian-Macedonian “linguistic” problems shows several important points that make this picture much more complex.

First, the construction of the Macedonian literary norm cannot be understood without examining the real and symbolic role played by the

¹⁹⁷ See *The Earliest Stage of Language Planning*, ed. Fishman.

¹⁹⁸ Claude Hagège, “Voies et destins de l’action humaine sur les langues,” in *Language Reform. History and Future. La Réforme des langues. Histoire et avenir. Sprachreform. Geschichte und Zukunft*, ed. István Fodor and Claude Hagège, vol. 3 (Hamburg: Buske Verlag, 1989), 47.

¹⁹⁹ Sériot, “Faut-il que les langues,” 185.

Bulgarian language in the historical context of geographic Macedonia. Bulgarian identity was undoubtedly the main point of reference that modern Macedonian identity had to define itself against, and the Macedonian standard language was largely developed in an effort to distance itself sufficiently from its eastern neighbor.

Second, the role of the Serbian norm as a model in the Macedonian case, versus the role of the Russian norm in the Bulgarian case, is also crucial. The principles of codification of Macedonian are unintelligible without taking into account the linguistic, cultural and political influence of Serbia over the southernmost Yugoslav republic where this standard language took shape.

Third, the standardization of Macedonian has had a visible impact on Bulgarian linguistics and politics. We cannot understand the character of today's Bulgarian nationalism, as well as the conservatism of Bulgarian linguistics, a number of its interpretations and theses without taking into account the development of the Macedonian language. After Macedonian codifiers tried to counter Bulgarian linguistic influence, Bulgarian scholars attempted, in turn, to counter the very existence of a Macedonian standard norm. The restoration of traditional Bulgarian nationalism by Todor Zhivkov's regime and its political disputes with Tito's Yugoslavia are, from this point of view, also unintelligible without understanding the way the Macedonian standard language was constructed. The same holds true for the situation after communism and the breakup of Yugoslavia with the resurgence of Bulgarian-Macedonian controversies.

Moreover, in both the Macedonian and the Bulgarian context, there were projects of language revision that represented more or less direct reactions to the bilateral controversies. These projects constitute the "positive" aspect, as it were, of the Bulgarian-Macedonian linguistic entanglement. Bulgarian authors advocated modifying Bulgarian in ways that would have brought it closer to Macedonian. At the same time, political milieus and activists, both in the Macedonian republic and in the Macedonian diaspora, tried to defend their language from Sofia's accusations of its "Serbified character" and to build a "genuine" national norm.

Finally, the standardization of Macedonian cannot be analyzed without reference to an—even larger—international context, transcending the purely "South Slavic" one. Suffice it to say that the first Macedonian scholarly grammar was published by an American linguist. One can likewise recall the role played by Western European linguistics—for instance, the French linguists from the interwar period. Among the political actors, communist parties also made their "contribution."

Extremely significant as well is the Russian/Soviet “factor.” Its importance is twofold: first, Russian recognition of the Macedonian language, which so frustrated the linguists in Sofia, was an implicit facet of the Bulgarian-Macedonian controversies during communism. Second, Russian influence over standard Bulgarian should be also taken into account. In fact, Sofia’s polemical denunciation of the “Serbification” of Macedonian largely results from the fact that the Bulgarian scholars—and even more so, political figures—do not find in Macedonian certain vocabulary words and phraseology that were imported into their language from Russian. Today, these words and expressions, perceived as “typically Bulgarian” by the Bulgarians, are replaced in Macedonian by Serbian-derived analogues.

Bulgarian linguists often try to downplay the importance of the “Russian contribution” to the codification of their literary tongue or to present it as “compensation” for the lexical and morphological riches that medieval Bulgarian gave to Russian.²⁰⁰ But this interpretation merely tries to hide the historical rupture and lack of continuity between Old Bulgarian literature and the modern national language. Furthermore, Sofia’s polemicists condemned the Serbian influence agreed to by the codifiers of Macedonian even as they hailed the Russian influence in Bulgarian as an “enrichment.”²⁰¹ Just as Macedonian cannot be understood without reference to Serbian and Bulgarian, Bulgarian is fundamentally intertwined with Russian.

Apart from disclosing the double standards of the Balkan linguists, this study sought to substantiate the following, more general conclusion. It is clear that national languages cannot be regarded as isolated and immutable realities. But one must also take into account to what extent they have historically constructed *each other* both in dialogue and in antagonism. They are much more the results of national ideologies than the source of them, and these ideologies are themselves always intertwined. Finally, every national language is a “dialect with an army” precisely because it has both allies and adversaries.

²⁰⁰ Elena Georgieva and Metodi Lilov, “Die bulgarische Literatursprache und die Sprachreform,” in *Language Reform. History and Future. La Réforme des langues. Histoire et avenir. Sprachreform. Geschichte und Zukunft*, ed. István Fodor and Claude Hagège, vol. 3 (Hamburg: Buske Verlag, 1989), 113–135.

²⁰¹ Popov, *Iz istoriyata*, 149–150.

THE ALBANIAN LANGUAGE QUESTION: CONTEXTS AND PRIORITIES

Alexander Vezenkov

In the perspective of Balkan history, the Albanian language question remains somewhat overshadowed by the problems involving more widely used languages (like Turkish or Greek) or linguistic branches (such as the Slavic or Romance languages) in the region. Furthermore, Albania-related topics are often underrepresented in Balkan studies and were even less represented in the past. For that very reason here I will try to give due attention to the Albanian case, of course, seen in a larger perspective. On the one hand, in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Albanian history, problems related to language had an extremely important role and were examined in numerous studies by Albanian and foreign scholars.¹ On the other hand, I think the Albanian case could be a convincing example, demonstrating to what extent the language policies in the region were interconnected and mutually influenced each other. I will address the topic as an “outsider”—both a non-linguist and non-Albanian. This position carries obvious limitations but at the same time allows one to grasp the importance of the Albanian language question in the wider context of Balkan history, beyond the parochial borders of a strictly national history and/or a purely linguistic debate. At the same time major decisions in language policy depended not only on the knowledge of experts but also on national and political considerations, some of them influenced by developments well beyond the Albanian-speaking community(-ies).

To a certain extent the Albanian case also represents a greater challenge if one wants to examine possible entanglements with other language policies. Albanian has no close affiliation to other languages and occupies a branch all its own among Indo-European languages, while its standardization took place mostly during the country's self-isolation in the communist era. I will try to demonstrate that even for Albanian there are important interconnections and interplays, and that this case reflects

¹ A bibliography of works in Albanian: Ibrahim Goçi, “Bibliografi e veprave të gjuhësisë (1967/2006),” *Gjurmime Albanologjike. Seria e shkencave filologjike* 37 (2007), 315–322.

some more general issues concerning the language problems in the Balkans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Albanian language question differs in several ways from that of other Balkan languages, due mainly to its relatively late development as a written language. First of all, during the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, there were heated debates among Albanian intellectual and political leaders over the choice of an alphabet. They had to choose among several different alphabets that were already being used by some Albanian clerics and intellectuals—Greek, Latin, Arabic (some even proposed Cyrillic), as well as several “original” Albanian alphabets. For other Balkan languages either there were no doubts concerning the alphabet (Greek), or else the question was whether to replace the existing alphabet with a new one based on Latin script (Romanian, 1840s–1862; Turkish, 1928). Other language reforms led to the introduction and/or abandonment of only a few letters of the alphabet (Serbian, 1818, officially 1868; Bulgarian, 1899, 1945; Macedonian, 1945; Romanian [temporarily], 1953–1993) or diacritic marks from the alphabet (two of the three accents and the breathing marks in Greek, 1982).

Secondly, in contrast with the Turkish and especially the Greek language question (but also for a certain period in the Serbian and Bulgarian case) the debates over the simplification of the official norm or its replacement with another one based on the spoken language were unthinkable in the Albanian case. Here the opposition between the official norm and the spoken language was of a different nature—the imposition of a deliberately created standard on the basis of one of the dialects over the others. In fact this problem dominated the Serbian/Serbo-Croatian and the Bulgarian cases, but in the Albanian language question its central place was unchallenged. The problem was deciding which of the existing dialects should be taken as a basis for the literary language.

Virtually all scholars point to the crucial role of the language in the formation of Albanians’ modern national identity, given that they also belong(ed) to several different religious communities—Sunni Muslim, Shia Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic. In this situation the language turned out to be the key unifying element. In addition the language was widely used to underline the uniqueness of the Albanians as a nation. An Indo-European language, Albanian forms a branch of its own; in practice that made delimitation vis-à-vis the neighbors—Greeks and Slavs—an easy task.

Finally, as with Romanian, but more persistently, attempts were made to use the language history as at least a partial substitute for the lack of

“Albanian” political history during most of the Middle Ages. Language history is used to demonstrate the Albanians’ ancientness and ethnic and territorial continuity. According to the dominant view in Albanian scholarship, the Albanians’ predecessors were the inhabitants of the western Balkans during antiquity—the Illyrians. This conclusion implies not only the ancientness of the language, and therefore of the people, but also the continuity of the territory. The claim that the local Illyrian population “preserved” its language (which, according to the official view, developed into present-day Albanian), and unlike some other peoples were not Latinized, is presented as a manifestation of the Albanians’ combative spirit and struggle for independence.² Historiographic and linguistic publications often insist that Albanian is one of the “most ancient” languages in Europe. This unclear statement is designed to counterbalance the observation that Albanian was the last national language in Europe whose existence was attested to in written documents.³

Given the crucial role played by the language in the Albanian national development, its dialectal differences also turned out to be an important problem. They form two major dialects or groups of (sub)dialects—Geg in the North and Tosk in the South; the dividing line is considered the Shkumbin River in central Albania. Both Tosk and Geg are each further subdivided into several sub-dialects, but there are stronger differences between the sub-dialects in the North. The Geg dialects are more widespread and are spoken by approximately two-thirds of Albanians.⁴

The dialectal differences among Albanians are even more important, because they coincide with other substantial regional differences between North and South, concerning phenomena as wide-ranging as settlement system, common law and popular music. In general the South is considered economically more developed, with a better-educated elite, while the North is more traditional and patriarchal, with tribes and clans playing a much greater role in everyday life and political organization. The North-South division coincides with the religious division among Christians—Orthodox in the South and Catholics in the North—that was only partially

² Mahir Domi, “Probleme të historisë së formimit të gjuhës shqipe,” in *Konferenca kombëtare për formimin e popullit shqiptar, të gjuhës dhe të kulturës së tij*. Tiranë 2–5 korrik 1982 (Tirana: ASHRPSSH, 1988), 178–179.

³ Robert Elsie, *Histori e letërsisë shqiptare* (Tirana and Pejë: Dukagjini, 1997), 23. Originally published as *History of Albanian Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

⁴ Agniya Desnitskaya, *Albanskiy yazyk i ego dialekty* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1968); Bahri Beci, *Dialektet e shqipes dhe historia e formimit të tyre* (Tirana: Dituria, 2002).

erased by massive Islamization during the Ottoman period.⁵ As for the Muslims themselves, the unorthodox Muslims—the Bektashi—are concentrated mostly in Tosk regions.

Last but not least, the dialectal differences correspond to important political divisions. In this regard the regime of King Zog I is seen as the domination of a dictator and an elite from the North, while the communist regime is regarded as a domination of the South. This tradition persisted after 1990; the Socialist Party (that is, the party of the former communists) gets stronger support in the “red South,” while the Democratic Party has more backing in the “blue North.” This phenomenon was clearly visible during the first years of representative democracy and still exists, although the contrast is no longer so sharp. For instance, during the parliamentary elections of 1997, the Democratic Party received 25.8 percent of the national vote, but at local levels, results varied between 57.9 percent in the district of Tropojë in northwest Albania, which is the native place of its leader Sali Berisha, and a mere 7.5 percent in the district of Gjirokaster in the South, whose main city is the native town of the late communist dictator Enver Hoxha.⁶

The various dimensions of the Albanian language question were not equally important. The struggle against the use of foreign languages in education was long, but as in all other cases in the region, it ended with a predetermined victory. As for the controversies concerning the origin of the Albanian language, and more precisely its continuity from Illyrian, the debate remains purely historiographical, without direct political consequences.⁷ In fact two problems consecutively dominated the Albanian language question, provoking intense debates among the Albanian elites themselves, as well as extensive academic research. The first problem is related to the development of an Albanian alphabet and the debates over which one should be chosen; these debates lasted during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries until an independent Albanian state was established in 1912. Thereafter, they quickly faded away, and the present-day Albanian alphabet was finally accepted by everyone.⁸

⁵ *Südosteuropa Handbuch*, vol. 7, ed. Klaus-Detlev Grothusen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1993), 21, 495, 588–589, 638, 716–720.

⁶ Michael Schmidt-Neke, “Die Normalität als Ereignis: Die Parlamentswahlen in Albanien 2001,” *Südosteuropa* 50, no. 7–9 (2001), 328 and 337.

⁷ Joachim Matzinger, “Die Albaner als Nachkommen der Illyrer aus der Sicht der historischen Sprachwissenschaft,” in *Albanische Geschichte: Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung*, eds. Oliver Jens Schmitt and Eva Anne Frantz (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2009), 13–36.

⁸ Stavro Skendi, “The History of the Albanian Alphabet: A Case of Complex Cultural and Political Development,” *Südost-Forschungen* 19 (1960): 263–284; *Alfabeti i gjuhës shqipe*

The second major problem is related to the development of a common standard norm for the Albanian language, to be imposed over the existing dialects. This new standard, worked out mostly on the basis of the southern dialects, attracted much attention and provoked spirited debates in the late twentieth century that continue until the present day.⁹

No Nation Without an Alphabet

Educated Albanians started to write well before their mother tongue became a written language, and they did so in different foreign languages. Those who started to write in their mother tongue used the script they were already familiar with and that was also most familiar to their potential readers. The variety of alphabets used among this relatively small population resulted from the fact that the Albanian-speaking communities professed a number of religions and that educated people from the respective religious communities learned to read and write in the schools of their own confession. Most of them used adapted forms of Latin and Greek script, as well as the Arabic alphabet, in order to write in Albanian. Initially the use of one alphabet or another was not so much an individual choice but corresponded to the religious affiliation of the writer. Until the nineteenth century, Albanian writers produced mostly religious works but also poetry and dictionaries.

dhe Kongresi i Manastirit (14–22 nëntor 1908). Studime, materiale, dokumente (Tirana: Universiteti i Tiranës, 1972); Frances Trix, "Alphabet Conflict in the Balkans: Albanian and the Congress of Monastir," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 128, no. 1 (1997): 1–24; Frances Trix, "The Stamboul Alphabet of Shemseddin Sami Bey: Precursor to Turkish Script Reform," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31, no. 2 (1999): 255–272; Tomor Osmani, *Udha e shkronjave shqipe* (Shkodër: Idromeno, 1999), here citing the 2008 edition, published by the Academy of Science in Tirana; Xhevat Lloshi, *Rreth Alfabetit të Shqipërisë* (Skopje: Logos, 2008). For a full bibliography: Palok Lulash Daka, Tomor Osmani and Maks Gjinaj, *Bibliografi për historinë alfabetit të gjuhës shqipe 1844–2008* (Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, 2008).

⁹ Janet Byron, *Selection among Alternatives in Language Standardization: The Case of Albanian* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1976); Georges Drettas, "L'Albanais national—du choix politique au choix linguistique," in *Language Reform: History and Future*, vol. 4, eds. István Fodor and Claude Hagège (Hamburg: Buske, 1989), 163–188; Arshi Pipa, *The Politics of Language in Socialist Albania* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989). Translated by Primo Shllaku as *Politika e Gjuhës në Shqipërinë Socialiste* (Tirana: Princi, 2010); Bahri Beci, *Historia e standardizimit të shqipes. Politika dhe planifikimi gjuhësor në Shqipëri* (Tirana: SHBLSH e RE, 2010); Alexander Vezhenkov, "Politicheski izmereniya na albanskiya ezikov vopros," *Istoricheshko badeshte*, no. 1–2 (2002): 61–74; Petăr Vodenicharov, "Standartizirane na albanskiya knizhoven ezik—politicheski i religiozni ideologii," *Balkanistichen forum*, no. 1 (2010): 186–204.

The first texts written in Albanian and preserved to the present day are in various Latin-based scripts and date at least as far back as the fifteenth century. Albanian authors of the Catholic faith like Gjon Buzuku, Lekë Matrenga, Pjetër Budi, Frang Bardhi and Pjetër Bogdani produced major printed works in Albanian as early as the sixteenth or seventeenth century. All of them had to adapt the Latin alphabet for those sounds in Albanian that had no equivalent in Latin/Italian, by using digraphs, trigraphs, Greek and in some cases (such as Buzuku) Cyrillic letters. There were some differences between the alphabets used by the first of these writers, but now their works are seen as part of the same long tradition that lasted until the nineteenth century, although literary production declined after the seventeenth century. Later on it became known as the “alphabet of the ancient writers of the North” and also as the “Catholic Alphabet.”¹⁰

The use of the Greek alphabet to write in Albanian—more precisely, in its southern dialects—is also documented relatively early, around 1500. Still more works are preserved only from the eighteenth century, when the printing house in Moschopolis (Voskopojë) operated. Those writers used the “Arvanitic alphabet,” which was, in fact, a Greek alphabet adapted to reflect the specific sounds in Albanian with a few additional letters and several digraphs. Among the better-known figures who used the Greek alphabet during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were Theodor Kavalioti, Theodor Haxhifilipi, Dhanil Haxhiu, Konstantin (Kostë) Berati, Vangjel Meksi and Marko Boçari (Botzaris). Still, the literary production in Greek script remained modest compared to the output of the Catholic writers in the North.¹¹

The use of the Latin- and Greek-based alphabets not only corresponded to the religious affiliation of the writers but also coincided with the dialectal split in Albanian—Geg dialects were written with Latin letters, and Tosk dialects usually used Greek letters. As an exception, some of the Albanian immigrants in Italy, known as the *Arbëresh*, also used Latin letters; later on Orthodox/Tosk émigrés in the West also adopted the Latin script.

Understandably, many Albanian Muslims preferred writing in Arabic script, and several poets from central Albania during the eighteenth century (including Nezim Frakulla, Sulejman Naibi and Hasan Zyko

¹⁰ Skendi, “The History of the Albanian Alphabet,” 265; Osmani, *Udha e shkronjave*, 22 ff.

¹¹ Robert Elsie, “Albanian Literature in Greek Script: The Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth-Century Orthodox Tradition in Albanian Writing,” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 15 (1991): 20–34; Osmani, *Udha e shkronjave*, 110 ff.

Kamberi), known as *bejtexhi*, made use of it. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this practice was still popular among Muslim Albanians, and some poets (Muhamet Kyçyku, the brothers Shahin and Dalip Frashëri, Ali Ulqinaku) continued to use it. But gradually the use of Arabic script was restricted to purely religious writings.¹² Obviously a number of state-sponsored publications in Albanian were also printed in Arabic script.

Starting in the eighteenth century, several original alphabets were developed in order to write in Albanian, most of them in central Albania. One such example is the alphabet used in the Anonim of Elbasan, a Gospel manuscript translated from Greek. Another one was invented in the late eighteenth century in the same town by Teodor Haxhifilipi (Dhaskal Todri), but as of the mid-nineteenth century only several dozen people in and around Elbasan were able to use it. Several other alphabets were created in the early nineteenth century and are attributed to, or at least associated with, Konstantin Berati, Jan Vellarai, Beitha Kukju and others. In their diffusion, all these alphabets remained marginal compared to the Latin-, Greek- and Arabic-based scripts. In fact, even the inventors of the original alphabets otherwise used some of the major scripts, most often Greek. In any case, Albanian went from being a virtually unwritten language to a language written in a profusion of alphabets.

The establishment of a single alphabet and the gradual development of a literary language are usually regarded as a triumph of the Albanian national idea over the religious affiliations. But the very practice of writing in one's mother tongue was initially adopted and applied precisely by clerics, in many cases for the purposes of religious propaganda. The Catholic Church relied on the vernacular during the Counter-Reformation, and this partly explains the publication of religious works in Albanian, although the larger-scale competition between Reformation and Counter-Reformation did not directly affect the Albanian lands. The Orthodox Church was much less interested in putting religious propaganda in the vernacular, but in order to counter Islamization, some works were written in Albanian.¹³ Paradoxically, the most important contribution in this regard came in the nineteenth century from the Protestants, that is, a denomination

¹² Robert Elsie, "Albanian Literature in the Moslem Tradition: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Albanian Writing in Arabic Script," *Oriens: Journal of the International Society for Oriental Research*, Leiden 33 (1992): 287–306, accessed on July 14, 2011. <http://www.elsie.de/pdf/articles/A1992MoslemTradition.pdf>; Elsie, *Histori e letërsisë shqiptare*, 86.

¹³ Skendi, "The History of the Albanian Alphabet," 265–267.

that was only marginally present in the otherwise multi-religious Albanian space. At a later stage their activity turned out to be a valuable resource for the development of literary Albanian itself. Translations of the Bible played an important role (as they did with so many other languages) in the development of literary Albanian in its two main dialects.¹⁴

As early as the nineteenth century, there were not simply cases of adaptation of an existing alphabet or development of a new one for the use of a few literate people, but conscious attempts to adapt (or create) an alphabet for all Albanians. In the attempts to create an Albanian alphabet, all available and already used alphabets were tested—primarily the Latin script, but also Greek and Arabic, while additional original Albanian alphabets were also developed. The earliest serious attempt to create and popularize a common Albanian alphabet was apparently that made by Naum Veqilharxhi (1797–1846). He published a “Primer” (*Evetor*) with thirty-four letters in 1844 (and republished it in 1845, in an expanded edition). This “Primer” found some readers and followers, mainly in southern Albania.

Above all, a common alphabet was seen as a way to simplify written communication among all Albanians. In fact, a common alphabet would be useful only within a viable Albanian cultural and political milieu, with people communicating mostly within the national community. Otherwise, for Orthodox priests it was much more convenient to use Greek script, just as for the Catholic priests the Latin script was most appropriate. Until at least the mid-nineteenth century, the use of different alphabets by the respective religious communities was the easiest and most satisfactory solution. As a result of their religious and educational background, Albanians were able to read and understand their mother tongue in one alphabet or another. That was also true for printing, insofar as they used the existing printing houses and the available letters. By contrast an original Albanian alphabet, containing letters unavailable in other alphabets (or including letters from several alphabets), would be far more difficult and expensive, if not impossible, for existing printing houses to print.

Even in the 1860s and 1870s, some Albanian writers continued to see the parallel use of more than one alphabet as more appropriate. As late as 1869, Demetrio Camarda advocated the parallel use of two alphabets—a Latin-based alphabet for Geg and a Greek-based one for Tosk. In fact, he

¹⁴ Nathalie Clayer, *Aux origines du nationalisme albanais. La naissance d'une nation majoritairement musulmane en Europe* (Paris: Karthala, 2007), 180 ff.

himself used both.¹⁵ As is well-known, starting from the 1860s Kostandin Kristoforidhi (1827–1895), one of the most prolific figures of the Albanian national movement, published several works consecutively in both dialects using a Greek-based script for the text in Tosk and Latin-based script for that in Geg.¹⁶

Although some Albanian intellectuals advocated the need for a unified alphabet as early as the 1840s and 1850s, the first important collective effort took place in the late 1860s (and probably continued until the early 1870s) in the Ottoman capital, Istanbul. At a certain point in 1867 or shortly afterward, some of the leading Albanian intellectuals of that time (such as Kostandin Kristoforidhi, Jani Vreto, Ismail Kemal [Qemali], Pashko Vasa and Hasan Tahsin[i]) started to gather regularly to discuss the most appropriate solution. Ottoman authorities were sympathetic to this effort and probably even initiated it, in order to instrumentalize the Albanian movement against Greek aspirations and influence during the crisis that followed the uprising in Crete.

At this stage the participants' opinions differed significantly. Jani Vreto advocated the use of the Greek alphabet, referring to the Pelasgic theory, which held that Albanians and Greeks had common origins. Pashko Vasa, among others, advocated the use of the Latin script; in 1878 he prepared one such alphabet and published it in Istanbul as a pamphlet. Arabic script was also defended as an option: for instance, Daut Boriçi tried to adapt Arabic script for writing in Albanian (1861) and later published a primer with this alphabet (1869/1870).¹⁷ In the 1870s Hasan Tahsin proposed his own fully original alphabet, but he found only a few followers.¹⁸ The very idea of a uniquely Albanian alphabet did not lose its influence, but at that time the prevailing opinion favored adapting one of the already existing major alphabets. Each of them had certain advantages that were reflected in the positions defended by the participants in the debates in the late 1860s.

In the nineteenth-century Ottoman milieu, Arabic script initially had two important advantages—more than two-thirds of Albanians were Muslim, and the official language of the empire was written in an Arabic-based alphabet. For most Albanians that would make achieving literacy easier,

¹⁵ Clayer, *Aux origines*, 209; Osmani, *Udja e shkronjave*, 391–392.

¹⁶ *Fjalori enciklopedik shqiptar* (Tirana: ASHRPSSh, 1985), 551.

¹⁷ Robert Elsie, *Dictionary of Albanian Literature* (Westport, NY, and London: Greenwood Press, 1986), 18; Osmani, *Udja e shkronjave*, 286–291.

¹⁸ Osmani, *Udja e shkronjave*, 248–266.

allowing them to use the same letters in writing their mother tongue, in religious life and in state administration. Still, even at that time not all Muslim Albanians were amenable to writing their mother tongue with Arabic script—among them Ismail Kemal and Hasan Tahsin. Their arguments were primarily phonetic: they pointed out that the Arabic alphabet was not appropriate for writing in Albanian. These doubts were not unheard of in the Ottoman Empire—in the 1860s the first (albeit isolated) comments appeared that Arabic script was not appropriate for the Turkish language.¹⁹ As a whole, critiques of the use of Arabic letters were more common among Albanians, not only overshadowing the debate about their use in Turkish but also at least partly preparing the ground for the Turkish language's own script reform in the twentieth century.

During the first debates concerning the choosing of an Albanian alphabet during the 1860s and 1870s, the Ottoman authorities seemingly preferred Arabic script as a solution, but they also favored the creation of an "original" Albanian alphabet as more advantageous than the direct adoption of Greek or Latin script.²⁰ Initially the Ottoman authorities were eager to counterbalance Greek influences among Albanians and therefore to support genuine national trends among Orthodox Albanians. The situation became much more tense during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the very act of writing in Albanian was regarded as a political crime, and once again shortly after the 1908 revolution, when the authorities openly and forcefully tried to impose the use of Arabic script.

The problem with the Greek alphabet and its rejection is somewhat different. For Orthodox Albanians the national feeling developed in close connection with Hellenism, while Greek culture still had great prestige among Balkan Christians. The emancipation of Albanian nationalism from Hellenism was inevitable in the long run, but took time for many Orthodox Albanians, which explains why, even in the early twentieth century, some advocated using Greek letters. Only later on did Albanian historiography exaggerate and misrepresent pressure from the Greek/Orthodox religious authorities as an ambition to impose the use of their alphabet. Unlike the Catholic Church in the North, the Orthodox Patriarchy was amenable to writing in Greek, not in Albanian with Greek letters.²¹ In the posthumous publication of Kostandin Kristoforidhi's Greek-Albanian

¹⁹ Bilal Şimşir, *Türk Yazı Devrimi* (Ankara: TTK, 1992), 20–22; Clayey, *Aux origines*, 225.

²⁰ Clayey, *Aux origines*, 222.

²¹ Elsie, "Albanian Literature in Greek Script."

dictionary, the publishers in Athens wrote that the Albanians could be enlightened only through “Greek letters and Greek language.”²² However, the use of Greek letters was advocated in only a few other cases, so we cannot speak of a consistent policy in this regard.²³ In fact, the major religious publications in Albanian with Greek letters were translated and published on the initiative of Protestant missionaries, simply making use of the alphabet the Christians in southern Albania were more familiar with. Furthermore, they were translated into the local dialect—Tosk or Geg, respectively. The rejection of the idea of writing with Greek letters resulted more from the emancipation of the Albanian national movement from Hellenism (some also mention the conflicting territorial aspirations of the two neighboring nations) and less from a reaction to a “denationalizing policy” of the Constantinople (Greek) Patriarchy.

Despite having the longest tradition, the Latin script, at first glance, had weaker positions. First of all, only a small fraction of Albanians—probably less than 10 percent—were Catholic. There were several different Latin-based alphabets that openly competed with each other. The fact that several Latin-based scripts competed with each other was probably a shortcoming in the short run, but also an advantage, allowing the most appropriate solution to be found through experimentation.

An important factor in strengthening the position of the Latin-based scripts was the development of modern education in the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth century. It included French language lessons, which familiarized educated people with the Latin script regardless of which type of school they attended. The Latin script was used in the most developed countries of the world and was more prestigious than any other script at that time. Moreover, in practical terms it served to distinguish Albanians from their immediate neighbors—Greeks and Orthodox Slavs—as well as from the “Turks.”

It is important to note that Albanians did not regard the Latin-based alphabets as a threat, even though religious missions and, later, Austro-Hungarian and Italian diplomats helped spread them. Obviously the Ottoman authorities saw the missionary and consular activities as foreign intervention in the Empire’s affairs and an attempt to instigate national separatism, unrest and disintegration. At the same time these activities were harmless from an Albanian point of view, at least in the short term.

²² Skendi, “The History of the Albanian Alphabet,” 274.

²³ Clay, *Aux origines*, 293, note 3; Lloshi, *Rreth Alfabetit*, 173.

However, later on Albanian historiography downplayed the role of this foreign “assistance” in an attempt to present the national movement as fully independent and indeed combating all sorts of foreign interests and interventions.

Besides the influence of the Catholic Church and the Austro-Hungarian and Italian diplomats over part of the Albanian elites, the most important and in fact decisive reason to choose a Latin-based alphabet was the Albanians’ European identity. After the Enlightenment the concept of Europe as a separate continent fundamentally changed the mental maps of the region, which started to be perceived as “European Turkey” rather than an integral part of the empire and therefore of the Orient. The Balkan peoples readily adopted that vision and started to perceive themselves as “Europeans.” Albanians’ opposition to the use of Arabic script resulted from the self-perception that, unlike Turks and/or Arabs, they belonged to Europe—not only geographically but also culturally and historically.²⁴ This identification gradually overshadowed the religious feelings of most Albanians.

Suggestions that Albanians use Cyrillic letters came from foreigners (Bulgarians and Serbians)²⁵ and could not have had real support among Albanians themselves. In fact, the use of Cyrillic among Albanians was rare. The problem with this proposal was that it looked like an attempt by the neighboring Slavic nations to dominate the Albanians culturally and politically and even to assimilate them, since at that time no non-Slavic language was written in Cyrillic.

Obviously religious affiliation played an important role in people’s preferences for a given alphabet, but other important factors also intervened. Indeed, those factors were crucial to understanding why, in the end Albanians adopted the alphabet that was initially used by the smallest religious community. The question is why the Latin-based script also gradually gained support among Orthodox and Muslim Albanians.

Each alphabet had its supporters, and some of them were institutionally powerful people—Ottoman officials, clerics and local community leaders. In parallel with the political and religious authorities in the empire itself, the lobbying of foreign diplomatic and religious missions played a role. Other active participants in the debates were the Albanian colonies in the

²⁴ Clayer, *Aux origines*, 324, 459 ff., 637–638, 648, 653.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 222 and 420.

Ottoman Empire itself (especially the Albanian community in Istanbul) and abroad, in the independent Balkan states (mostly those in Sofia and Bucharest), in Western Europe and, increasingly, in the United States. Publications abroad mostly favored the use of Latin script, because the activity of emigrants in Western Europe and the United States gradually became more influential than those in Greece and Egypt. The authoritarianism and the censorship of the Ottoman authorities, especially under the regime of Abdulhamid II, inadvertently helped increase the role of Albanian emigrants and their publications in the debate over the alphabet.

The advocates of the different alphabets were Albanian patriots of various faiths, with various educational backgrounds and careers and with diverging convictions. Help and pressure from outside the Albanian community, which in the short run could have contributed to the spread of the given alphabet, almost automatically provoked backlashes, as such interventions were seen as a threat to the Albanian cause. That was to a certain extent the case with the use of the Greek alphabet, but mainly with the Arabic script, which benefited from the sympathies of the Ottoman authorities.

The single most important attempt to create an Albanian alphabet was the so-called Stamboul alphabet devised by Sami Frashëri, known in Ottoman and Turkish history as Şemseddin Sami (1850–1904). Also collaborating in this endeavor were several other leading intellectuals—his brother Abdyl, Pashko Vasa, Hasan Tahsin and Jani Vreto, who created the “Society for the Printing of Albanian Writings”; some even considered this alphabet to be their collective output. The Stamboul alphabet was based on the Latin script, but for the sounds in Albanian that could not be expressed with the available letters, new ones were added. These were mostly from Greek but, for the upper cases, some were Cyrillic; some of these supplementary letters were modified or turned upside-down. As a result this new alphabet had a more original appearance than previous attempts to adapt the Latin script.

Although the discussions in the late 1860s and early 1870s did not bear immediate results, on several points consensus was already reached. First of all the idea of a Latin-based alphabet prevailed. At the same time it was obvious that any alphabet would need adaptation to the specific needs of Albanian phonology—something already clear from the previous uses of Latin, Greek and Arabic alphabets. At this point, thanks to the linguistic abilities of Sami Frashëri (he was familiar with Richard Lepsius’s

“Standard Alphabet”),²⁶ resolution on the number of letters was also achieved: there were thirty-six in his alphabet, just as in the present one. By contrast, in the past the number varied considerably—there were thirty-one letters in Beitha Kukju’s alphabet and more than fifty in Theodor Haxhifilipi’s script.²⁷

But the problem with the alphabet was only partially resolved. For the next three decades the Stamboul alphabet became the one Albanians used most, but it was not accepted by all of them. Often labeled the “national” alphabet,²⁸ it indeed dominated in some regions (southern and central Albania, the Albanian colonies in Sofia and Bucharest), but it was only occasionally used in northern Albania.²⁹ There, and especially in Shkodër, Latin-based alphabets dominated, although they competed with each other. Even Pashko Vasa (1825–1892), who took part, along with Sami Frashëri, in the publication of a booklet with the Stamboul alphabet in 1879, continued to use a Latin-based script, in the form he himself had proposed in 1878.³⁰ Invented by a Tosk, the Stamboul alphabet was used mostly by Tosks.

In the Catholic North some started to look for new solutions. In Shkodër the newly established literary society Bashkimi (meaning “Union” or “Unification”) proposed a more simplified all-Latin-based alphabet in 1899. Almost all of the members of the society were Catholic clerics and were led by Preng Doçi, who designed this new alphabet. It followed as much as possible the Latin script, adding to it digraphs and only one letter diacritic (é), which also existed in French. Despite a number of differences between individual letters, this is the logic inherited by the present-day Albanian alphabet. Similar solutions involving the extensive use of digraphs were already included in the Latin-based alphabets proposed by Pashko Vasa and by Faik Konica. Konica popularized his alphabet in his magazine *Albania*, first published in Brussels in 1897, and then in London, starting in 1902.

²⁶ Trix, “The Stamboul Alphabet,” 258.

²⁷ There were fifty-two letters, according to Leopold Geitler, *Die albanesischen und slavischen Schriften* (Vienna: Alfred Höfler, 1883), 52–53, 167. Other authors counted fifty-three and even fifty-seven: Osmani, *Udja e shkronjave*, 122–123.

²⁸ Lloshi, *Rreth Alfabetit*, 38, 46, 49.

²⁹ Boyka Sokolova, *Albanski vāzrozhdenski pechat v Bālgariya* (Sofia: BAN, 1979), 164; Shaban Demiraj, *Gjuha shqipe dhe historia e saj* (Tirana: ShBLU, 1988), 265.

³⁰ Tomor Osmani, “Alfabeti i Pashko Vasës,” in *Alfabeti i gjuhës shqipe dhe Kongresi i Manastirit*, 88–89.

Finally in 1901 another society in Shkodër—Agimi (“Dawn”)—and more specifically, Ndre Mjeda (1866–1937), proposed one more Latin-based alphabet. But instead of digraphs this alphabet largely used diacritics and in this way respected the “one sound—one letter” principle. It followed as a direct model the Latin-based Croatian script, but in fact similar solutions were used in all Slavic languages written with Latin-based script, as well as in Romanian. The consecutive spread of the Bashkimi and the Agimi alphabets benefited from the support of Austro-Hungarian diplomatic missions, and the former also received some Italian funding.³¹

Thus some Albanian intellectuals insisted on the need for easy printing but also tried to keep the new alphabet as close as possible to those in Western Europe. In this case a number of digraphs had to be used (Pashko Vasa, Konica, Bashkimi). Others preferred to follow strictly the principle “one sound—one letter” and used letters from other alphabets (Frashëri) or diacritics (Agimi). The “one sound—one letter” principle also fit well with the effort to make the Albanian alphabet “unique” (Frashëri).

Still, on many occasions even the leading figures of the national movement made concessions by using multiple alphabets in order to reach specific audiences. Faik Konica published some texts in his journal in Albanian with Arabic letters and even articles in Turkish and Greek in order to make them understandable for more traditional Muslim and Orthodox Albanians, respectively.³² The use of one alphabet or another continued in many cases to be the spontaneous choice of people who had already mastered one of them, without necessarily reflecting a clear stand on the alphabet controversy and even less questioning the Albanian self-identity of the given writer. But once put on the agenda, the alphabet issue became more and more politicized, and every educated Albanian had to take sides.

This situation demanded new efforts to achieve consensus, as many Albanian intellectuals pointed out in their writings. The Austro-Hungarian diplomats and especially August Kral also insisted that one single alphabet be adopted,³³ but the opportunity to do so arose only after the 1908 revolution and the subsequent liberalization. At first it made possible an

³¹ Skendi, “The History of the Albanian Alphabet,” 272–273; Trix, “The Stamboul Alphabet,” 265.

³² Clayer, *Aux origines*, 425, 447, 556.

³³ *Ibid.*, 432, 594; Lloshi, *Rreth Alfabetit*, 24–25, 37–38.

upsurge in the Albanian national movement that was used without much delay by the Albanian intellectuals.

At the initiative of the Bashkimi literary society, fifty Albanian intellectuals from across the country and the colonies abroad gathered in Manastir/Bitola at the November 1908 "Congress of the Alphabet." After long debates and the appointment of a special smaller commission of eleven members (four Muslims, four Orthodox and three Catholics), it was decided that only two of the existing alphabets should remain in use—the Stamboul alphabet and the Bashkimi alphabet. In addition, some changes were made in both alphabets in order to reduce the differences between them.³⁴ In the following years and after the creation of the Albanian state, the Bashkimi alphabet became the only one still in use.

The entanglement between the alphabet debate and the Geg/Tosk division of the Albanian dialects also appeared during the Congress of the Alphabet in Manastir. According to Gjergj Kiriazi, the organizers received a number of telegrams with conflicting demands—those from the North (*Gegëria*) asked for the Bashkimi alphabet to be approved, while those from the South (*Toskëria*) called for Sami Frashëri's alphabet.³⁵ Other lines of division among the participants proved to be more important. Finally the commission's four Orthodox members (that is, Tosks) decided to support the Bashkimi alphabet along with two of the three Catholics. The Stamboul alphabet benefited from the support of the four Muslim representatives, joined by Ndre Mjeda, the author of the Agimi alphabet. Mjeda was probably jealous that the Bashkimi alphabet was preferred to his own, but he also genuinely preferred the "one sound—one letter" principle.³⁶

Despite the divisions and contradictions and the prolonged inability to reach a consensus, from the 1870s onwards, all sides agreed on one point—the Latin-based alphabet. The debates were over precisely what the alphabet should consist of. Should it be enhanced with letters from other alphabets? If not, should diacritics be used, or digraphs? From this point of view, later attempts by the newly established administration of the Committee of Union and Progress to impose the Arabic alphabet³⁷

³⁴ Skendi, "The History of the Albanian Alphabet," 275–277; Mahir Domi, "Alfabeti i gjuhës shqipe dhe Kongresi i Manastirit," in *Alfabeti i gjuhës shqipe dhe Kongresi i Manastirit*, 34–50.

³⁵ Domi, "Alfabeti i gjuhës shqipe," 36, note 39.

³⁶ Skendi, "The History of the Albanian Alphabet," 275–277; Trix, "The Stamboul Alphabet," 265–266.

³⁷ Skendi, "The History of the Albanian Alphabet," 278–283; Clayer, *Aux origines*, 61ff ff.

were absolutely inadequate. Supporters of the Arabic script insisted above all on the sacred nature of the letters used in the Koran. They were not able to put forth a more universal argument, except that using this alphabet eased the integration of educated Albanians in the Ottoman administration and public life.³⁸ Still, after 1908 it was too late to rely on such an argument. Not only was the end of Ottoman domination approaching, but the Albanian national movement had made its “European” choice. Although the Committee’s policy of imposing the Arabic script had some vocal supporters in more traditional religious milieus among Albanian Muslims themselves, the move was counterproductive and in fact convinced those in the national movement even more strongly to support the Latin-based script(s). At that time some Albanians even published Turkish texts in Latin script.³⁹

It might be surprising that, after these long and tense debates, the present-day Latin-based alphabet (that is, the 1908 revised version of the Bashkimi alphabet) finally prevailed without provoking major controversy. The process was rather spontaneous, and some practical reasons also contributed to it—publications in Albanian appeared more and more often in Western Europe and the United States, where it was easier and cheaper to use only Latin letters.

Despite the fact that the Stamboul alphabet finally lost the competition, the “one sound—one letter” principle remained firmly embedded in the thinking of Albanian linguists and intellectuals. In the present-day Albanian alphabet there are only two letters with diacritics (ç, ë) and nine digraphs (dh; gj; ll; nj; rr; sh; th; xh; zh), but these are still considered separate letters. Once again this is not an original solution—digraphs are counted as separate letters in Latin-based Slavic alphabets, as well as in Hungarian. The idea of an “original,” purely “Albanian” alphabet also remained popular. In some communist-era Albanian publications one sometimes encounters nostalgia toward the Stamboul alphabet and its originality, as well as efforts to deny the Catholic clergy’s contribution to the development and the spread of the precursors of the actual all-Latin alphabet.⁴⁰

The development of the Albanian alphabet was not only a practical necessity and a linguistic challenge but also a central element of the

³⁸ Clayer, *Aux origines*, 642.

³⁹ Nathalie Clayer, “Le premier journal de langue turque en caractères latins: *Esas* (Manastir/Bitola, 1911),” *Turcica* 36 (2004): 253–264.

⁴⁰ Domi, “Alfabeti i gjuhës shqipe,” 27, 39 ff.

nation-building process. Writers and intellectuals at that time insisted that the alphabet was a national and not simply a linguistic issue.⁴¹ An anonymous author in *Kalendari Kombiar*, published in Sofia, wrote in 1905 that “the letters [that is, the alphabet] give the nation the right to call itself a nation.”⁴² The Albanian national movement was so preoccupied with this question because the alphabet was an important identity marker in the Ottoman space. In practice every religious and/or national community used to write and publish in its own alphabet, which was visibly different from those of the other communities. The Stamboul alphabet, with its peculiar letters, was a phenomenon typical of this Ottoman milieu—it was invented and popularized in this context, although there was no practical support from Ottoman authorities. Not surprisingly, this alphabet disappeared after Ottoman domination over the Albanians ended.⁴³

The role of the Ottoman context stands out even more when one takes into consideration the chronology of the alphabet issue. The most important steps in the creation of one common alphabet coincided with major turning points in Ottoman and Balkan history. The first discussion about the Albanian alphabet took place in Istanbul after the crisis with Greece over the island of Crete; at this point Ottoman authorities showed sympathy toward the Albanian cause, although they did not provide practical help. The Stamboul alphabet was created and popularized after the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878, which mobilized the Albanians under the banner of Ottomanism against Greek and Slavic ambitions but also gave impetus to the Albanian national movement itself. The Bashkimi and Agimi alphabets were created shortly after Austro-Hungary and Italy began engaging more actively in the western Balkans.⁴⁴ The Congress of the Alphabet took place after the revolution of 1908, which provided more freedom for national expression, at least for a certain period.

Still, one other “context” seems even more important and certainly dominated in the long run: the European one. The influence of the foreign religious and consular missions and the role of the diaspora in the West were not decisive in themselves. The adoption of a Latin-based alphabet for Albanian, as with Romanian and Turkish, could be better seen as part of the general trend of Europeanization and Westernization in the region, which at the same time dovetailed with the national agenda.

⁴¹ Jup Kastrati, “Lufta për njësimin e alfabetit shqip në vitet 1878–1905,” in *Alfabeti i gjuhës shqipe dhe Kongresi i Manastirit*, 77.

⁴² Sokolova, *Albanski vāzrozhdenski*, 164.

⁴³ Trix, “The Stamboul Alphabet,” 267.

⁴⁴ Clayer, *Aux origines*, 590.

One People, One Party, One Orthography

Typically, when a language standard was elaborated, it was based on the spoken language of the capital city. That was the case for modern Turkish, where the language spoken in Istanbul naturally took this role, but also for Greek, where southern Greek dialects amalgamated in Athens at the time when *katharevousa* was still the official norm. As in the cases of Serbian/Serbo-Croatian and Bulgarian, the Albanian language-builders had to make a “subjective” choice—to seek a compromise among the different dialects and to choose one of them as the basis of the future standard.

As I have already demonstrated, the divisions concerning the alphabet were related not only to religious divisions, but also to the dialectal Geg/Tosk split. Still, once solved, the problem of the alphabet could not influence the choice of the dialect, which had to serve as the basis of the official standard. The choice of an entirely Latin-based script could not be regarded as a victory of the Geg North or of its Catholic component but instead fit into the general trend of ever-increasing use of this graphic system.

Although the choice of an alphabet for Albanian came only after long debate and great tension, this issue was of less import to the various segments of Albanian society than the later choice of a dialect upon which to base the new official standard. In the latter case a group of people either imposed its own dialect or had to comply with the specificities of some other group’s dialect. Once adopted, the alphabet was much easier to learn and internalize. By contrast, not only does an official norm based on a substantially different dialect require much more effort to learn, but a gap between standard and spoken language inevitably appears that could last for at least several generations.

Deciding which dialect should serve as a basis of the standard language was not easy, and not only because the native speakers of both dialects usually tended to advocate their own. Many were ready to accept the existence of two main dialects and the fact that Albanian was written in both of them. Some started to search for a compromise solution between northern and southern dialects and advanced the idea of choosing some dialect from the transitional zone between them. They most often proposed the language spoken in the town of Elbasan, not only because of its central location in the Albanian lands, but also because the local dialect, though part of the northern group, was closer to the southern dialects.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Byron, *Selection among Alternatives*, 54.

Among them was Sami Frashëri, although he himself wrote in the Tosk dialect of his native region.

Another often-quoted example for the complications surrounding this choice is the position expressed by Aleksandër Xhuvani (1880–1961). In 1905, in one of his early publications, he claimed that the basis of the national language should be the southern dialect, although he himself originated from Elbasan, linguistically in the North.⁴⁶ Xhuvani insisted that from a linguistic point of view, it was impossible to meld different dialects into one national language, that one of the dialects always became the basis of the national standard. According to him the Tosk dialect was more appropriate for this purpose. Later Xhuvani's position was often quoted by those who wanted to promote the Tosk dialect as a basis for standard Albanian, but for a long time Xhuvani himself contributed to the development and the spread of the standard based on the dialect of Elbasan, teaching in it and publishing a schoolbook and a grammar in the 1930s.⁴⁷ In his later publications, even after 1944, he continued to use the northern variants of the standard where possible—for example, in his introduction to the new edition of Kristoforidhi's *Albano-Greek Dictionary*.⁴⁸ At that time he was among the few who objected to the official policy of rapid imposition of a single Tosk-based standard.⁴⁹

Although the first mentions of the differences between dialects as a problem to be overcome date almost from the time when the problem of the alphabet was debated, most educated people regarded it as normal that everyone wrote according to his native dialect. The ambition to write in a language “understandable to everyone” also implied respecting the existence of dialects, something most clearly visible in the work of Kristoforidhi. Calls to establish one single standard initially appeared sporadically, and the first institutional efforts also took place shortly before and after independence.

The first attempts to agree on one common standard ended in a compromise solution, which was not categorically imposed. One year after the Congress of the Alphabet, in September 1909 a similar, though smaller,

⁴⁶ Ibid., 56; Demiraj, *Gjuha shqipe*, 270.

⁴⁷ Byron, *Selection among Alternatives*, 58.

⁴⁸ Kostandin Kristoforidhi, *Fjalor shqipe-greqisht* (n.p.: Universiteti shtetëtor i Tiranës, 1961), 5–12. Xhuvani's introduction was written in 1953.

⁴⁹ Arshi Pipa, *Politika e Gjuhës*, 263–264. Pipa quotes Aleksandër Xhuvani, “Mbi gjuhën letrare kombëtare shqipe,” *Buletin për shkencat shoqërore* 4 (1952): 70; David Luka, “A mund të zgjerohet baza dialektore e shqipes standard,” (Shkodër, 2010), 8. Accessed on July 14, 2011: <http://albanologjia.com/pdf/referate/David%20Luka.pdf>.

meeting in Elbasan decided that the spoken language from Elbasan should serve as a basis in teaching and publications. The Literary Commission that operated in Shkodër from September 1916 to September 1917 confirmed the decision of 1909 and published a booklet with orthography rules.⁵⁰ In fact, many scholars see the work of this commission as the beginning of the institutionalized standardization process. The decision was confirmed once again by the Educational Congress in Lushnja in August 1920 (not to be confused with the National Congress in the same town in late January of the same year) and finally by the Ministry of Education in 1923. Later, schoolbooks and grammars based on this norm were published, but no dictionary appeared.

The language variety spoken in Elbasan was undoubtedly a compromise—the one proposed by many in the previous decades. This standpoint dominated during the interwar period, despite discussions and new attempts to codify the language in the 1930s. Still, the norm was not accepted by everyone, and many authors from the South continued to write in Tosk, while writers in Shkodër kept using their northern Geg dialect.⁵¹

A complete turnabout took place after World War II, when the newly established communist regime started to impose a norm based on the southern dialect. New orthographic rules elaborated in 1947 (published in 1948 and with minor additional changes in 1951) and in 1956 gradually imposed a standard based mostly on Tosk, although it contained a few elements from the northern dialects. In the quest for a unified standard, the number of double forms, permitting spellings according to both dialects, was reduced, though not eliminated.⁵² That was seen as a temporary concession, and the regime openly stated that the final goal was to achieve a completely uniform orthography.⁵³ The *Dictionary of the Albanian Language*, published in 1954 (the first of its type in Albanian), is representative of the chosen direction. Here words are given according to the way they are written in Tosk, and only on rare occasions, when there

⁵⁰ *Rregulla mbi ortografinë e gjuhës shqipe të shkrueme* (Shkodër, 1917). Quoted in *Kongresi i drejtshkrimit të gjuhës shqipe. 20–25 nëntor 1972*, vol. 1 (Tirana: ASHRPSH, 1973), 406.

⁵¹ Jup Kastrati, “Vijat e përgjithshme të zhvillimit historik të drejtshkrimit të shkipes (deri në çlirim),” in *Kongresi i drejtshkrimit*, vol. 1, 399–411; Byron, *Selection among Alternatives*, 57–58.

⁵² Demiraj, *Gjuha shqipe*, 274.

⁵³ Aleksandër Xhuvani, Kostaq Cipo and Ekrem Çabej, *Ortografia e gjuhës shqipe* (Tirana: ShB Naim Frashëri, 1951), 3–4.

is a difference in the meaning, are forms in Geg also included as separate entries.⁵⁴ In 1952 the Albanian Writers Union decided that in its publications only the official norm would be followed; Geg could be used only in poetry and, in exceptional cases, in prose (only in the characters' dialogue, not the author's narration). Only a few authors kept writing in their northern dialect. The use of the Geg dialect in the press was also reduced.⁵⁵

Such a shift was still feasible because the previous standard was not accepted by all the elites, and because 80 percent of the population was still illiterate. Still, it remained difficult to teach the people this new standard, which was generally distant from the spoken language most of them were used to. Initially, in order to help end illiteracy, primers in both dialects were published. By the early 1950s a single primer was introduced for the whole of Albania.⁵⁶

A decisive step was taken in 1967 with the publication of the project for "Rules of Albanian Orthography." Here almost no double forms were allowed,⁵⁷ while the tendency to give priority to the southern dialects was preserved. The culmination of the process was the Congress of Orthography held in Tirana between November 20 and 25, 1972. Here, in the presence of the party and state leadership, including Enver Hoxha, the common orthographic rules were definitively adopted.⁵⁸

A bit earlier, on October 10 of the same year, the Academy of Sciences of the People's Republic of Albania was created. On the one hand this act had a symbolic value, showing that in this respect Albania was catching up with other European nations.⁵⁹ On the other, the new institutional framework was needed in order to fulfill the practical work for the definitive codification of the language. During the following years the Academy of Sciences published a new orthography (1973), spelling dictionary (1976), phonetics and grammar (vol. 2 in 1976, vols. 1 and 3 in 1983) and dictionary

⁵⁴ *Fjalor i gjuhës shqipe* (Tirana: Instituti i Shkencave, 1954), v.

⁵⁵ Desnitskaya, *Albanskiy yazyk*, 33–34; Byron, *Selection among Alternatives*, 61, 65.

⁵⁶ Androkli Kostallari, "Gjuha letrare kombëtare shqipe dhe epoka jonë," in *Gjuha letrare kombëtare shqipe dhe epoka jonë. Materiale të konferencës shkencore të mbajtur në Tiranë më 7–8 dhjetor 1984* (Tirana: ASHRPSSH, 1988), 40. According to Shaban Demiraj (*Gjuha shqipe*, 273), that happened during the 1951/1952 school year.

⁵⁷ Usually it is claimed that in the 1967 project there were no double forms at all (e.g., Demiraj, *Gjuha shqipe*, 274). In fact there were a few, only minor, exceptions: Tomor Osmani, "Procesi i njësimit të dubleteve drejtshkrimore në ortografitë e viteve 1948, 1951, 1956, 1967," in *Kongresi i drejtshkrimit*, vol. 2, 541–557.

⁵⁸ *Kongresi i drejtshkrimit të gjuhës shqipe. 20–25 nëntor 1972*, vols. 1–2 (Tirana: ASHRPSSH, 1973).

⁵⁹ *Südosteuropa Handbuch*, vol. 7, 575.

of the Albanian language (1980). Pedagogic materials conforming to the new regulations were also published. During the 1980s a series of trilingual dictionaries (Albanian-French-Russian) appeared with terminology in specific branches,⁶⁰ which clarified the terminology in Albanian. This series of official editions had to accomplish the process of standardization, insofar as the creation and the clarification of specialized terminology is one of the key elements of every language-building process. Obviously official authorities during the communist regime were determined to develop a new standard and worked actively toward it.

The first question that arises is why a complete turnabout occurred in the language policy after 1944, leading to the Tosk dialect to be selected as the basis of the future standard. According to the critics of this policy, the turn simply resulted from the political domination of Tosks after 1944. Most of the Albanian political elite at that time, including Enver Hoxha himself, originated from the South, and that reflected the composition of the communist-dominated “national liberation movement” during World War II.⁶¹ As for the Geg dialect, it seemed “compromised,” in part because it was used during the regime of King Zog I, but especially because it was associated with Catholic activities in Shkodër, the biggest center in the North, which competed with the Tosk South at the time of the national revival (the *Rilindja*).⁶² From its early days the communist regime was more radical in its measures against the Catholic Church than the other denominations,⁶³ obviously because it was subordinated to Rome.

Official publications during the communist era advanced completely different reasons for the language policy change. They insisted that in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the South possessed more numerous and influential intelligentsia, and as a result the Tosk dialect was more developed as a written language. It was often reiterated that most of the famous figures of the Albanian national movement during the late Ottoman period originated from the South and wrote in Tosk and that, as a result, the majority of the periodicals and printed books before independence (during the *Rilindja*) were in Tosk. Official publications

⁶⁰ E.g., Libraries and Bibliography, 1982; Statistics, 1983; Political Economy, 1983; Anatomy, 1985; Finances and Bookkeeping, 1985; Law, 1986; Histology and Embryology, 1986.

⁶¹ Byron, *Selection among Alternatives*, 61, 74–75. The book was sharply criticized in communist Albania: Kostallari, “Gjuha letrare,” 37; Pipa, *Politika e Gjuhës*, 130–133, 285–287.

⁶² Byron, *Selection among Alternatives*, 61.

⁶³ Svetlozar Eldarov, “Pravoslavni i katolitsi v Albaniya,” in *Albaniya i albanskite identichnosti*, ed. Antonina Zhelyazkova (Sofia: IMIR, 2000), 110–111.

also point out that the southern dialects were more homogenous, while in the North there were more important internal differences.⁶⁴

It is debatable whether literature and culture in the South was actually superior at the time of the *Rilindja*, or whether this notion was later invented, at least partially, for political reasons. Publications from the communist period systematically downplay the cultural achievements of the North, and academic studies deal much more often with intellectuals from the South.⁶⁵ In many cases the regime thus sought to downplay the contribution of the Catholic Church and its clergy, foreign religious and diplomatic missions, and so on. For example, when official publications stated that the first school to provide teaching in Albanian was created in Korçë (in southern Albania) in 1887, they omitted mention of the school created by the Franciscans in Shkodër in 1861.⁶⁶ When they insisted on the richer literary tradition of the South during the *Rilindja*, they obscured the otherwise well-known fact that the written tradition of the Catholics in the North has a longer history, with printed books from the mid-sixteenth century onwards, compared to only the eighteenth century for the Orthodox in the South.

While the communist authorities imposed a standard based on the Tosk dialect, they also started to deny this fact. In this regard official publications in communist Albania are euphemistic at best, especially those published during the last decades of the regime; it became an exception to mention the simple fact of which dialect serves as a basis of the official standard.⁶⁷ From the mid-1960s official publications increasingly insisted that the standard norm was based not on the Tosk dialect, but on a mixture of both dialects, because it also contained elements from Geg.⁶⁸ Of course this statement does not prove anything—there is no standard that does not contain elements from dialects other than the one it is based on. Most publications also insist that literary Albanian developed so much due to the profound transformations during the socialist period and that

⁶⁴ Desnitskaya, *Albanskiy yazyk*, 49.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁶⁶ Drettas, "L'Albanais national," 168.

⁶⁷ In the communist-era Albanian publications that I was able to consult, this was mentioned only in Androkli Kostallari, "Gjuha e sotme letrare shkiye dhe disa probleme themelore të drejtshkrimit të saj," *Kongresi i drejtshkrimit*, vol. 1, 89, but not in the later publications of the same author. Also: A. Toma, Z. Karapici and L. Radovicka, *Gjuha letrare shqipe. Libër mësimi*, vol. 1 (Tirana: ShBLSh, 1989), 278.

⁶⁸ Byron, *Selection among Alternatives*, 62.

it was not identical with any of the inherited dialects.⁶⁹ The regime also insisted that all Albanians (that is, not only those from the North) would need to learn the new standard.⁷⁰ Official publications stressed that the creation of the standard was a “scientifically grounded process,” that the language policy entirely complied with the “objective laws of social and linguistic development.”⁷¹ During the last decades of the communist regime, the fact that the new standard was dominated by the Tosk dialect was usually mentioned only by foreign scholars.⁷² Official publications within the country rejected these otherwise well-founded statements as “anti-scientific,” “anti-historical” and “anti-Albanian.”

Various publications constantly quote certain foreign linguists and/or Albanologists (such as Holger Pedersen and Maximilian Lambertz), as well as the Austro-Hungarian diplomat August Kral, who pointed out that the differences between the two dialectal groups in fact were not that important.⁷³ The differences between the two dialects are downplayed by pointing out that they are “primarily phonetic”⁷⁴—a misleading remark, because dialectal differences are always primarily phonetic. On a similar note, official publications stated, somewhat controversially, that in the new standard language an equal number of elements were taken from both dialects, but from the southern dialect there were more phonetic elements, while from the northern there were more morphological ones.⁷⁵ Given the fact that the differences were “primarily phonetic,” it becomes clear that the Tosk finally dominates in the new standard.

The interpretations concerning the history of the dialects were also politically and ideologically motivated. In contrast to the usual emphasis on the ancientness of the Albanian language, most scholars regarded the dialectal split as a relatively late phenomenon, although some of the

⁶⁹ Kostallari, “Gjuha letrare,” 44, 51, 58. A graphic (p. 51) representing the formation of the new standard Albanian suggests that: 1) the basis of the literary standard is what is common for the two dialects; 2) in addition some elements were added equally from both dialects; and 3) the new standard language is something more than the combination of the two existing dialects, it is also the result of additional development and elaboration.

⁷⁰ Kostallari, “Gjuha letrare,” 45.

⁷¹ Ibid., 35; Demiraj, *Gjuha shqipe*, 273.

⁷² Desnitskaya, *Albanskiy yazyk*, 33; Byron, *Selection among Alternatives*, 59–60; Sokolova, *Albanski vāzrozhdenski*, 166 ff.; Drettas, “L’Albanais national,” 172.

⁷³ Desnitskaya, *Albanskiy yazyk*, 45–46; Bahri Beci, “Lashtësia e dialekteve të shqipes—dëshmi e vendbanimet të hershëm të shqiptarëve,” in *Konferenca kombëtare për formimin*, 233–234; Demiraj, *Gjuha shqipe*, 231.

⁷⁴ Demiraj, *Gjuha shqipe*, 229–230.

⁷⁵ Kostallari, “Gjuha letrare,” 48.

characteristics of the dialects appeared as early as the Middle Ages.⁷⁶ There is even a hypothesis that the very formation of the ethnographic and dialectal groups of Geg and Tosk was related to the existence of the two semi-independent political units in Albanian territories in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries—the Pashalik of the Bushatli family in the North, with its main center in Shkodër, and the Pashalik of Ali Tepelena in the South, with its center in Ioannina.⁷⁷ In other words, while the nation, its unity and territory were ancient, internal divisions resulted from short-term political constellations that were minor compared to the nation's history taken in its entirety. In addition, the dialectal divisions were seen as characteristic of one specific historical era, “feudalism,” which meant that their disappearance was inevitable. Other authors advanced the opposite thesis—that the dialectal split was very old and that the dialects were shaped as early as late antiquity or the early Middle Ages, before the Slavic invasions. The aim was to prove, through the ancientness of the dialectal differences, that the Albanians lived for thousands of years without interruption in precisely the same territories as today.⁷⁸

Besides the choice of the Tosk dialect as basis of the standard, another, more fundamental question arises: why did the communist authorities implement one single standard norm with such determination? And also, why were they denying the dominance of the Tosk dialect in the new Albanian standard?

It seems that the Geg/Tosk dialectal split became a taboo precisely because the leaders of the communist regime themselves regarded linguistic and all other regional differences as a potential threat and in fact overestimated them. While communist leaders and intellectuals publicly asserted that the dialectal differences were negligible, they privately feared that these differences were substantial. Such an attitude was not characteristic of the pre-communist period, and in the writings of most Albanian authors of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this question does not occupy a central place.⁷⁹ Faik Konica, one of the first

⁷⁶ Desnitskaya, *Albanskiy yazyk*, 46–51, referring to E. Çabej (“Gjon Buzuk,” in *Buletin për shkencat shokërore*, 1955, 2) and to Rr. Zojzi (“Ndanja krahinore e popullit shqiptar,” in *Etnografia Shqiptare*, vol. 1 [Tirana, 1960], 20).

⁷⁷ Desnitskaya, *Albanskiy yazyk*, 48, 53.

⁷⁸ Beci, “Lashtësia e dialekteve,” 229–239.

⁷⁹ See, for example, the two-volume publication of Sami Frashëri's works: Sami Frashëri, *Vepër*, vols. 1–2 (Tirana: ASHPSSH, 1988).

to call for the creation of one literary language, insisted at the same time that it would not mean “erasing” the existing dialects. In fact, he appreciated and even praised the dialects, because they reflected the character of Gëgs and Tosks, respectively.⁸⁰ By no means did all efforts in the field of language and education in the past engage with the problem of the dialectal differences, although, as we have seen, they were addressed on several occasions. By themselves the dialectal differences never put Albanian national unity into question, and for that reason they did not become a central political issue for a long time. They turned out to be a major problem only for those obsessed with this unity.

Of course, the differences between Gëgs and Tosks should not be overstated—they do not form two homogeneous groups, and other lines of division among Albanians also exist. Nor should one overemphasize the domination of Tosks during the communist regime—Ramiz Alia, who succeeded Enver Hoxha as Communist Party leader, was born in Shkodër. Still, without exaggerating the North/South (and respectively Gëg/Tosk) division, there are undoubtedly enough differences that could disturb a centralist regime. Thus it is not surprising that the authorities strove to overcome these differences while downplaying and even denying their existence. There is also no doubt that, behind the dialectal split, other substantial differences existed that made the implementation of a single standard even more controversial.

The communist authorities were much more determined than any previous government to elaborate one single language standard. They were also very consistent in implementing it in all spheres of public life. This was mostly because language standardization was seen as a tool for the nation’s unification; the overcoming of the dialectal split was only one element of the policies aiming to erase all internal differences inherited from the past. As a consequence, measures in the field of language policy coincided with other measures for national homogenization. Thus the project for “Rules of Albanian Orthography” was published in 1967, the same year that all religious activities were outlawed. These radical measures, especially the last one, led some to see a connection with the “Cultural Revolution,” implemented in Albania in parallel with the policy of the same name in China, then Albania’s close ally. Parallel does not mean identical,

⁸⁰ Artan Puto, “Faik Konitza, the Modernizer of the Albanian Language and Nation,” in *We, the People: Politics of National Peculiarity in Southeastern Europe*, ed. Diana Mishkova (Budapest, Central European University Press, 2009), 313–315; Beci, *Historia e standardizimit*, 43–44, 280.

because the leadership in Albania was following its own path, emphasizing nationalism and doing so under the firm and constant control of the central authorities, in contrast with the deliberately incited chaos in Mao Zedong's China.⁸¹ That was visible during the 1968 commemorations marking 500 years since Skanderbeg launched the struggle for independence. The Congress of Orthography itself took place on the eve of the sixtieth anniversary of the declaration of Albania's independence.

Despite the ideological dogmatism of the Albanian communist regime and its leader, as in many other cases the motivation of the language policy only partially resulted from the communist ideology. Ideological statements are inseparably amalgamated with nationalist ideology, and to a certain extent the former serve as an acceptable rhetorical cover to promote the latter.⁸² The purely regional patriotism of the Tosk lobby in the communist leadership notwithstanding, the language policy under Enver Hoxha had Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist rhetoric, but above all nationalistic goals.

In communist ideology, language development was treated as being interrelated with major sociopolitical transformations. Thus the "formation of the dialects" corresponded to the "feudal fragmentation"; the formation of "national states" during the "capitalist" era was related to the overcoming of dialectal differences in favor of a common national language; and finally, after the complete triumph of communism, differences between languages had to disappear altogether.⁸³ As in many other utopian visions, the last stage had to be left for the far future. In fact, as early as 1950, Stalin intervened in linguistic debates and rejected the class-based interpretation of language,⁸⁴ which gave "national languages" even more weight in official ideology. In practice the Albanian communist regime was established before the process of formation of a "common national language" was entirely completed, and the communist authorities undertook to achieve what they believed remained unfinished during "capitalism." As a result they simply started to work on the implementation of the "program" of nineteenth-century nationalism concerning the language. An ambition to unify the language is typical of the policy of

⁸¹ *Südosteuropa Handbuch*, vol. 7, 71–72.

⁸² Bernhard Tönnies, *Sonderfall Albanien. Enver Hoxhas "eigener Weg" und die historischen Ursprünge seiner Ideologie* (Munich: R. Oldenburg, 1980).

⁸³ Lucian Boia, *Mitologia științifică a comunismului* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1999), 101–108.

⁸⁴ Joseph Stalin, *Marksizm i voprosy yazykoznaniya* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1950).

modern nation-states at the time of their establishment. This paradigm was particularly intolerant toward all deviations from the established language standard; this is clearly seen in the language policy in France, starting with the 1789 revolution. In a similar way the language policy in communist Albania resulted mostly from the regime's preoccupation with national unity and consolidation. At the same time, the overcoming of dialectal differences and the implementation of a common standard was related to the communist regime's policy of homogenization, which sought to erase all regional differences.⁸⁵

The standardization of language had yet another significance for the official ideology and propaganda of the communist regime—it was presented as an important step in national development, one that aligned the Albanians with other developed nations that already had standardized languages. Of course this step resulted from the “rapid” development of the language after 1944, in parallel with the similarly rapid changes in all other domains of economic, social, political and cultural life. In the concluding speech delivered at the Congress of Orthography, it was stated that from that moment onwards, Albanian was entering the ranks of the developed languages.⁸⁶ Official publications started to describe the Albanian language with the adjectives “today's” (*e sotme*) or “literary” (*letrare*), and there were even debates over which of the two terms was the correct one, although both were used. For communist ideology the “unified literary language” was, like a level of development, achieved once and forever. Just as when the country's electrification was completed in 1971, or when Albania became the world's first atheist state in 1967, the establishment of a standardized literary language was presented as a consecutive step in the ascending development of the Albanian nation.

The problem of standardization went well beyond the country's borders. The reaction of the Albanian communities abroad clearly demonstrated that there were two dimensions to the language policy—national and political. On the one hand there was the negative reaction of the anticommunist émigré community, whose activists continued to publish their periodicals according to the old Geg-based norm.⁸⁷ This behavior is practically identical to the reaction of political émigrés to other orthography reforms

⁸⁵ Byron, *Selection among Alternatives*, 69.

⁸⁶ The concluding speech was delivered by Prof. Androkli Kostallari: *Kongresi i drejtshkrimit*, vol. 1, 221.

⁸⁷ Drettas, “L'Albanais national,” 184.

introduced by communist regimes. For the Albanian émigré community, just as with those of the Bulgarians and the Romanians, orthography became another factor dividing political opponents.

The reaction of the compact Albanian minorities in neighboring countries was completely different. Soon after the publication of the project for orthography rules in 1967, a "Language Commission" was convoked in Prishtina (April 22–23, 1968), which decided that these rules should also be respected in Kosovo. Local writers and intellectuals spared no efforts to adapt to the new rules and to comply with the norm. During the final approval of the new rules at the Congress of Orthography in 1972, there were delegates not only from all regions of Albania (from all twenty-seven districts), but also representatives from Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and the Albanian colonies in Italy (the *Arbëresh*). Official authorities in Albania insisted that the new orthography would unify not only the North and the South of the country, but all Albanians independently of where they were living.⁸⁸

The decision of the Kosovar linguists, intellectuals and writers (and local political leaders) was, at least at first glance, surprising and attracted the attention of various Western scholars.⁸⁹ The entire Albanian population in the region speaks Geg, and until 1968 the official norm there was based on it. The usage of this norm had been reconfirmed several times before then.⁹⁰ The 1968 decision to make the dramatic change in 1968 could be explained by the situation faced by Kosovo Albanians in Yugoslavia, where the elites of every "nation" tended to codify their own "national language." Albanians in Kosovo witnessed the developments surrounding the Serbo-Croatian language question and thus how minor differences could be either eliminated or emphasized in order to standardize one (Serbo-Croatian) or two different languages (Serbian and Croatian), depending on whether the aim was to create one single nation (Serbo-Croats) or to consolidate two nations (Serbs and Croats). The latter process—codification of two different national languages—started to dominate in the late 1960s and early 1970s. At roughly that time the formation of a specific Bosnian "national" identity occurred in parallel with discussions about a separate

⁸⁸ Kostallari, "Gjuha letrare," 35.

⁸⁹ Kostallari, "Gjuha letrare," 42, mentions, among others, Johannes Faensen, "Die Albaner von Kosova und die Einheit der albanischen Literatursprache," in *Ethnogenese und Staatsbildung in Südosteuropa* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1974); Hartmut Albert, *Kosova und die vereinheitlichte albanische Schriftsprache* (Heidelberg, 1983).

⁹⁰ Idriz Ajeti, "Rruga e zhvillimit të gjuhës letrare shqipe në Kosovë," in *Kongresi i drejtshkrimit*, vol. 1, 265–280.

Bosnian language, different from both Serbian and Croatian.⁹¹ Following the principle “one nation—one language” and in the name of national unity, Albanian political and intellectual leaders in Kosovo (and in fact all other Albanians in Yugoslavia) decided to accept the new standard, despite the fact that it was based on Tosk. Some of them insisted that they did not want to be separated from the Albanians in Albania by linguistic differences, as happened to the Macedonians (from the Bulgarians).⁹² Symptomatic of this type of thinking was the presentation of one of Kosovo’s representatives at the Congress of Orthography (1972), which is titled, on several occasions repeats and finally concludes with the slogan “One nation—one literary language, one orthography” (Një komb—një gjuhë letrare, një drejtshkrim).⁹³ Identical logic in the 1990s led Radovan Karadžić to seek to impose in Republika Srpska the pronunciation norm used in Belgrade, in other words, ekavian instead of ijekavian.

The language question in Yugoslavia provoked different reactions from interested neighboring countries: Bulgaria and Albania. In the 1960s Bulgarian authorities started openly to deny the existence of a separate Macedonian language by claiming that it was simply a Bulgarian dialect. Such a position was unable to gain support in Macedonia itself. But while official political and academic authorities in Sofia stubbornly refused to recognize Macedonian as a separate language, they also started to look for a flexible solution in the field of language policy. On the one hand, after the 1960s some Bulgarian linguists advocated reforms of the Bulgarian standard in order to include specifics of the western Bulgarian dialects and therefore of the language spoken in Macedonia. To that end they also advanced the idea of allowing some double forms, and a few were actually accepted. On the other hand, Bulgarian official publications started to present the standard in Macedonia as a regional variation of Bulgarian, trying to enlarge the Bulgarian linguistic space symbolically because it was not possible to do it for real.⁹⁴ At the same time, the linguistic policy in the Albanian case

⁹¹ Branko Franolic, “The Development of Literary Croatian and Serbian,” in *Language Reform*, vol. 2, 107–108.

⁹² Drettas, “L’Albanais national,” 172, note 6.

⁹³ Ali Hadri, “Një komb—një gjuhë letrare kombëtare,” in *Kongresi i drejtshkrimit*, vol. 2, 395–398.

⁹⁴ Rossitza Guentcheva, “Symbolic Geography of Language: Orthographic Debates in Bulgaria (1880s–Today),” *Language and Communication* 19 (1999): 365 ff.; Rossitza Guentcheva, “Bulgarian Linguistics Between East and West: Strategies for Incorporating Macedonia into the Imaginary Bulgarian Space during Socialism” (consulted in manuscript form, 2002).

was also different, because the reaction of the Albanian elite in Yugoslavia was different—Kosovo Albanians demonstrated a willingness to follow the official standard proposed by Tirana. Otherwise the radical policy of standardization in Albania itself would have been unthinkable.

In fact, Albanian authorities themselves were cautious to avoid a linguistic split with the compact Albanian minority in Yugoslavia, especially in Kosovo. The definitive adoption of the new standard came only after Tirana managed to develop closer ties with Kosovo, especially since the late 1960s, when local Albanians gained stronger positions in the administration of the autonomous province. This made possible the increased circulation of books and teachers from Albania to Kosovo. Furthermore, after 1968 Kosovo representatives started to attend academic seminars and conferences in Tirana on a regular basis.⁹⁵

The collapse of the communist regime in Albania in 1991 allowed the previously suppressed differences between Geg and Tosk dialects (as well as many other differences, such as those in religion) to reappear once again in public discourse. The problems of the Tosk-based standard, created to the detriment of the Geg dialect, started to be openly discussed. The situation in Kosovo also changed after the removal of the “Serb/Slav” threat and, finally, the international recognition of its independence in 2008.

Still, after two decades of free political expression, there was no serious attempt to change the standardized norm. Although the spoken language has kept its strong regional differences, Albanians today are taught to read and write according to the existing standard. For the vast majority of them, it would be more difficult to use another norm, even if it corresponds more closely to their own dialect. Unlike immediately after 1944, today the vast majority of Albanians are literate, while the standard was imposed not only through decrees, but also by decades of extensive philological work, schooling and media coverage. For that reason, even during the periods when the Democratic Party (whose strongholds are in the North) was in power between 1992 and 1997 and after 2005, the official language standard was not revised. The language standardization introduced and imposed by the communist regime turned out to be lasting.

⁹⁵ Mariyana Stamova, *Albanskiyat vāpros na Balkanite (1945–1981)* (Sofia: Faber, 2005), 184; Raymond Detrez, *Kosovo. Otlozhenata nezavisimost* (Sofia: Kralitsa MAB, 2008) 49–52, 68–71. Originally published as *Kosovo. De uitgestelde oorlog* (Antwerp: Hadewych, 1999).

Nevertheless, some changes are visible. After several decades publications and even periodicals appeared in Geg: since 2001 the newspaper *Java* (edited by Migjen Kelmendi) is published partly in Geg. Arshi Pipa's book (*The Politics of Language in Socialist Albania*, 1989) was translated and published in September 2010 in a bi-dialectal edition—in standard Albanian and in Geg. A growing number of scholars and intellectuals support enlarging the basis of the standard language by including more elements from Geg, as well as accepting publications in Geg dialect.⁹⁶ Foreign Albanologists also urge the study of the spoken language of the Geg regions, the study of their cultural heritage, the publication of Geg dictionaries and so on.⁹⁷

Contrary to the fears of some traditional advocates of the 1972 standard, this has not led to the re-establishment of two different norms in Albanian, nor into attempts to impose a Geg-based standard. These developments correspond to the general trend in Europe to re-evaluate local languages and dialects that were suppressed in the past. New liberal attitudes toward local languages are clearly visible in post-Franco Spain, in Italy and even in France. Swiss German dialects are widely used in everyday life, while in 1984 Luxemburgish was formally recognized as Luxembourg's third official language alongside French and German (thus finally breaking free of the latter). In Western Europe these developments have been taking place for at least several decades, but in Albania, due to its long communist-era seclusion, they could begin only after the fall of the regime.

The Albanian language question during the last two centuries was related to two major problems that attracted attention and became a matter of animated debates and deliberate policy at various times. On the one hand, it seems only natural that the ambition to reach agreement on a common alphabet preceded the standardization of the language—the latter would hardly have been feasible without the former. The linguistic policy had to address the specific problems of Albanian—there was a need to agree on an adequate alphabet as well as to develop a linguistic standard on the basis of the spoken language and in fact on the basis of one of its dialects.

⁹⁶ Luca, "A mund të zgjerohet," 2010.

⁹⁷ Chris Hughes, *Gegnishtja e sotme: A Course in Modern Geg Albanian* (Hyattsville, MD: Dunwoody Press, 2006); Hans-Joachim Lanksch, "Disa mendime për Gegnishten sot," *Letërsia Shqiptare*, December 1, 2008. Accessed on July 14, 2011. <http://letersia.zemrashqiptare.net/article/GjuhaShqipe/5820/>; Robert Elsie, "Kanadezit i duhet një fjalor gegnisht" (Robert Elsie interviewed by Kreshnik Berisha) in *Koha ditore*, Prishtina, September 4, 2010, p. 28. Accessed on February 14, 2012. www.elsie.de/pdf/interviews/I2010KohaDitore.pdf.

On the other hand, these two major priorities in Albanian language policy corresponded to the two clearly different political contexts in which they developed.

The efforts to create a common and distinctive Albanian alphabet during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries corresponded not only to the practical needs of the Albanian community but also to the ambition of the Albanian movement for national affirmation. From this point of view, the Stamboul alphabet of Sami Frashëri was the most successful of several attempts to legitimize the Albanians as a nation on their own within the Ottoman Empire with their own “national alphabet.” But besides the “Ottoman context” there was something even more powerful—the preference for a Latin-based script reflected the Albanian elite’s determination to form its nation as a “European” one. In the end, the secession of Albania sent the Stamboul alphabet into the history books, giving way to a purely Latin-based script that was as close as possible to those used in Western Europe. At the same time the alphabet was visibly different from those used by neighboring nations in Greece, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia.

Language standardization became a priority and was imposed under completely different conditions. Differences between dialects were a reality from time immemorial, but before 1944, attempts to create and impose a common standard were only tentative. The communist regime was much more determined to intervene in this field and had the power to do so, just as it did in all other spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life. Still, the dialectal split started to be seen as a serious problem only in the late 1960s and early 1970s. At the same time in Yugoslavia the codification of a separate Croatian language gained momentum, and the idea that Bosnian might be considered as a language also gained some support. At the same time Bulgarian authorities and scholars started to claim openly that Macedonian was nothing but a Bulgarian dialect artificially classified as a “national language.” Just as every community in the Ottoman Empire had its own alphabet, every nation in Federal Yugoslavia had its own language. In this context writing in Albanian according to two different norms looked more and more risky. The Albanians in Yugoslavia eagerly implemented the standard adopted in Tirana purely out of a desire to preserve national unity regardless of political borders. Several decades later the situation had changed so much that, when publications in Geg started to appear, few people saw them as a threat to Albanian identity and national unity.

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